

* LAMPS AND PATHS *

THEODORE T. MUNGER



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LAMPS AND PATHS.

BY

✓
THEODORE T. MUNGER,

AUTHOR OF "ON THE THRESHOLD."

2001

"God bless thee, and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty."

RICHARD III., ii. 2.



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Dedicated
TO
MARY WILLIS MUNGER
AND
THORNTON TAFT MUNGER.

P R E F A C E.



WE have a custom in North Adams of devoting a Sunday in June, each year, to a special service for the children of the Congregation. It is made a Festival of Flowers. All the beauty of leaf and blossom that can be won from garden and mountain-side — roses and larches, lilies of the field and laurel from the pastures, palms from the south and violets from the meadow, woven emblems of love and hope, and tender memorials of children gathered to the heavenly fold — are brought into the church and piled about the pulpit and chancel with a profusion that has no limit except room to contain it. It is a feast of tabernacles, — a carnival of floral beauty. But while considering the lilies, we also strive to tell the children the lesson they teach; and hence these brief and simple sermons preached as the occasion recurs. My present object is chiefly to secure a more enduring memory of them in the minds of those to whom they were addressed; but it is possible that they may serve a somewhat wider use.

While the story is the main medium for conveying moral truth to the mind of a child, there is still room for more systematic instruction ; and it is not well to omit this in the Christian education of children. It is hardly expected that many children will of themselves find their way through these pages, but under the guidance of parents they may, perhaps, receive from them a direct impression of duty such as the story does not always yield. If so, the little book will not be in vain.

I have joined to these discourses for children a Pastoral Address made to a large number of young persons who entered into the Church in March, 1883; and as the book is likely to fall into the hands of parents, and is, indeed, designed for the household, I have added a discourse on the Home in its Relation to Character, — believing that these additions will secure for the volume a more thorough unity.

No effort has been made to take out local color and allusion, either of place or occasion. All Berkshire is a poem of natural beauty, and it is kinder to offer it to the world than to hide it.

T. T. M.

NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION.

THE second edition of this book is published with an addition of four chapters, in the hope that in this form it may be regarded as a fit prelude to "ON THE THRESHOLD,"—a work designed for an older class of readers.

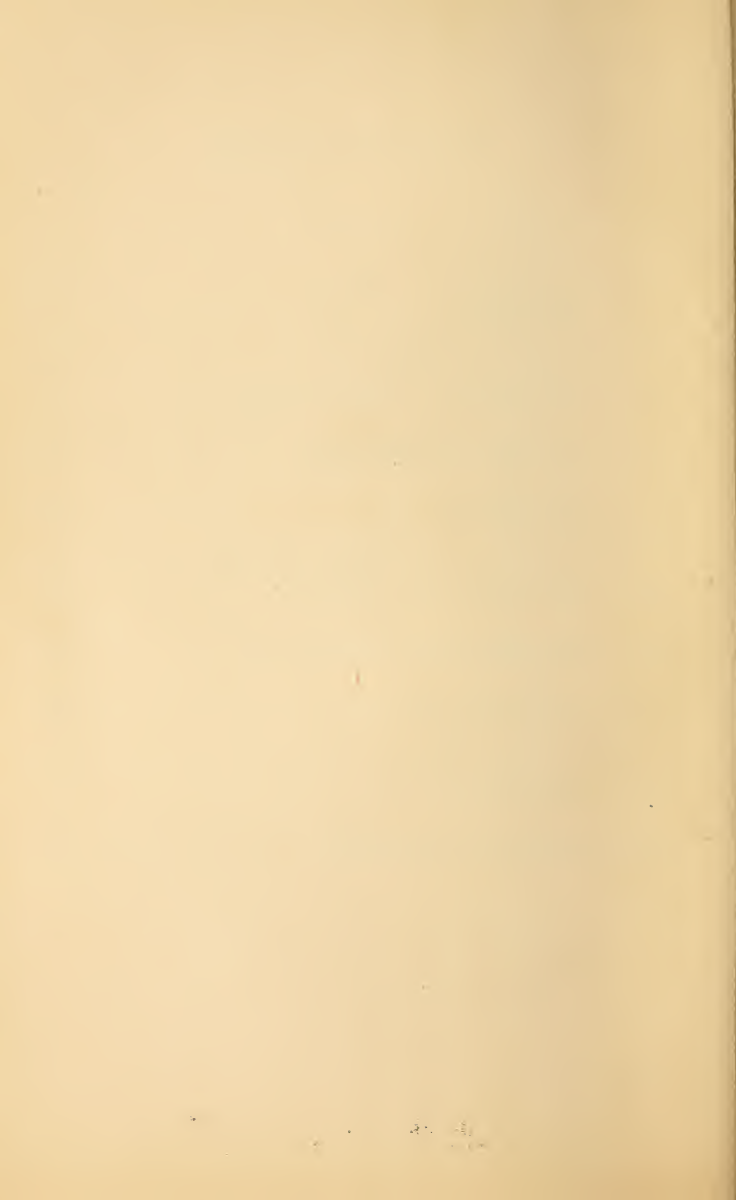
T. T. M.

NORTH ADAMS, November, 1884.

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1878.

THE DESERT.

OH, holy Sabbath bells !
Ye have a pleasant voice !
Through all the land your music swells,
And man with one commandment tells
To rest and to rejoice.

As thirsty travellers sing,
Through desert paths that pass,
To hear the welcome waters spring,
And see, beyond the spray they fling,
Tall trees and waving grass, —

So we rejoice to know
Your melody begun ;
For when our paths are parched below,
Ye tell us where green pastures glow
And living waters run.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

I.

THE DESERT.

"Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

PSALM lxi. 2.



HE first thing to do in a sermon is to explain the text, if it needs explanation,—as most texts do.

If you were to think of these words for a moment, I presume you would find yourself wondering why David, who wrote the Psalm, wanted to be led to a rock; and then why he wanted a rock higher than himself.

If he had lived here in Berkshire he would not need to have gone far; and he might easily have found many higher than his head. But it is not so everywhere. In central New York—where I spent my childhood—there are no rocks worthy of the name, and it was not till I was a large lad that I saw one half as high as my head. I remember one about as high as a

table, upon which the little lambs used to jump in play; and it was the largest in all the country about. But then we felt no need of rocks, as David seemed to have felt. Indeed, we were rather better off without them; and all the farmers about here will tell you that they wish they had fewer instead of so many. But for some reason, David prayed to be led to a great rock.

Now, to understand this we must take a long journey, a quarter of the way eastward around the earth,—to Syria and the great desert regions southward in Arabia, and farther east beyond the Jordan. Although David lived at Jerusalem when he wrote the Psalm, he had made long journeys and lived many months near these desert regions. When he was a young man, at one time he lived in a cave called Adullam, in a place where there were no houses nor trees. And afterward, when he was a king, he marched through deserts with his armies. And when he was a boy, and tended sheep, I presume he often had to lead the flock across desert places to find good pasturage. Now, there is no place where men travel that

is so hard and painful as a desert,—it is worse than arctic ice or tropical forests. In arctic regions exercise keeps one warm, and in the tropics the trees afford shade, and there are many beautiful and interesting things to engage the attention. But in the desert there is almost everything to make travelling uncomfortable, and nothing to make it pleasant. Deserts are very warm places. The sun shines fiercely, and the sand becomes hot. There is no cool, green grass; there are no trees for shade,—only a great wide stretch of sandy waste. Sometimes the ground is rough and flinty, but oftener it is just a level stretch of sand. Think how desolate and tiresome it must be,—no trees, no grass nor flowers, nor ferns nor mosses; no rivers nor brooks; no hills, no houses, no roads even, but just the level sand below and the blue sky above, filled with dazzling and burning light! Not a very nice place to be in, you see. Yet a great many people live near these deserts, and are forced to cross them,—sometimes making journeys weeks long. And, strange to say, these people get to love the deserts. Indeed, people generally love

the place where they were born, and where they live. The Icelanders say that "Iceland is the best land the sun shines on," though the sun scarcely shines enough to melt the ice in summer. And so the Arabs who live about the deserts get to love them, and doubtless think that a sandy desert is finer than a grassy field. And there is something about desert-life that tends to make them very thoughtful and wise. A great many of the wisest sayings ever uttered have come from these desert-dwelling Arabs. I presume it may be because in their long journeys and in their quiet lives they have a great deal of time for thinking. They have a very firm belief in the one God, and are very particular to pray to Him several times a day. Their religion requires them always to wash their hands before praying. Often in the desert they can get no water, and so they wash their hands in the clean sand; which shows how particular they are about their worship.

I read this story the other day, showing how an Arab proved the existence of God: —

"A Frenchman who had won a high rank among men of science, yet who denied the God who is the

author of all science, was crossing the Great Sahara in company with an Arab guide. He noticed, with a sneer, that at times his guide, whatever obstacles might arise, put them all aside, and kneeling on the burning sands called on his God. Day after day passed, and still the Arab never failed ; till at last one evening the philosopher, when he rose from his knees, asked him, with a contemptuous smile, ‘How do you know there is a God?’ The guide fixed his beaming eyes on the scoffer for a moment in wonder, and then said solemnly : ‘How do I know there is a God? How do I know that a man, and not a camel, passed my hut last night in the darkness? Was it not by the print of his feet in the sand? Even so,’—and he pointed to the sun, whose last rays were flashing over the lonely desert, — ‘that foot-print is not that of a man.’ ”

I think this was very beautiful, and also very good proof of the existence of God. I wish all of you, when you see the sun sinking behind the Taconics, into a bed of red and golden clouds, would stop and think that God is the source of all that beauty and glory.

A great many of these Arabs also, in all ages, have been very just and good men. We have many stories, in prose and verse, to illus-

trate this; but I think none are finer than the little poem by Leigh Hunt, entitled "Abou Ben Adhem," which I wish you all knew by heart: —

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold;
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said:
'What writest thou?' The Vision raised its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered: 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said: 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'
The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again, and with a great waking light,
And showed the names whom love of God had
blessed, —
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!"

They have also uttered a great many very wise and useful truths under the form of fables and parables. There is one that shows how an

evil habit — like drinking, or any kind of vice — grows and gains on one till at last it destroys him. When the Arab is travelling across the desert, he pitches a little tent for himself to keep out the cold, — for often the nights are chilly, — and ties his camel just outside. This is the fable : —

“One cold night a camel, thus fastened by a long tether, thrust his nose into his master’s tent, and said : ‘It is very cold, — let me put my nose within the tent ;’ and the indulgent master consented. Then the camel said : ‘It grows colder, — let me thrust in my whole head.’ Growing presumptuous, he at length pushed in the whole length of his crooked neck, and finally the entire bulk of his uncouth and ill-savored body. And when the master, remonstrating, said, ‘There is not enough room for me and thee,’ the camel replied : ‘It is verily so ; you may go out of the tent, — I shall remain.’”

This fable is for us all, young and old. It shows how if we indulge in any evil habit, it grows and grows, and consumes more of our time and takes up our thoughts, and crowds out everything good and noble, till there is nothing left but the evil habit. This is especi-

ally so in the habit of drinking. The boy or young man says, "Just a glass of beer now and then,"—and soon it is wine, and then it is whiskey; and before long he feels he must have it every day, till the terrible habit takes full possession of him, as the camel filled the tent. The moral is — *Do not begin!* If the Arab had not let the camel thrust in his nose, it would not have turned him out of his tent. Do not begin to swear, to tell lies, to cheat, to drink. A bad beginning makes a bad ending; and all bad endings begin in something small and slight: hence we need to be very careful.

But I must get back to the text. We have not yet found out why David prayed to be led to a rock higher than himself. I will tell you at once, and explain it afterward. It was because he wanted *shelter*. It was shelter that David prayed for; shelter from one of two things, — heat or storm.

In order to understand this, we must imagine ourselves making a journey across a desert, — not a level, sandy desert, but a rough, stony, barren waste like that south of Beersheba to-

wards Arabia. Imagine we have left this place in the morning, and are going to visit Mt. Sinai. The air is fresh and cool; we leave the vineyards and olive orchards, and enter the rough, wild waste. Soon not a tree is to be seen, nor any green thing. The sun mounts higher in the sky, and his rays beat fiercely upon us. We keep on bravely for a few hours, but towards noon the sun is so hot, and the way is so dry and rough, and we become so weary and oppressed with heat, that we are ready to faint. The sun's rays are everywhere; they prick us like hot needles, and everything we touch burns and blisters the skin. It is in vain to look for the shade of a tree, or a grassy ravine with springs of cool water. There are no villages nor houses where we can stop till the sun begins to go down; there is only the clear, burning sky above us and the dry, burning earth around us. Our only hope is to find some great rock so high as to cast a shadow, or with an overhanging arch under which we can hide ourselves till towards nightfall, when we can start again.

Now suppose you were *lost* in such a desert

and under such a sky. You have wandered till you are weary and ready to perish; it is in vain to pray for what is not there; so you pray that God would lead you to some high rock where you can rest and find shelter, and perhaps meet other travellers who will show you the way. Often at the foot of such rocks in the desert there are springs of cool water, and a little grass that the camels can eat; so you would find both shade from the sun and the refreshment of water.

But there are worse things in the desert than clear, hot sunshine. There are storms; and desert-storms are the worst that blow. It is terrible to be out upon the ocean in a tempest, or off upon the mountains when winter-storms are raging; but neither at sea nor in the mountains are storms so fearful as in the desert. At sea the danger is from water; in the desert it is from sand and dust and heat. In the mountains the danger is from cold and snow. These storms are called simoons. There is simply a fierce wind; but as it sweeps along it gathers up the dust and sand in such quantity that the sky is filled with it, — a great yellow, whirling,

driving cloud. When the traveller sees it coming out of the red sky he is terribly frightened, for if it blows any great length of time it will smother him to death. The camels fear it as much as their riders. They lie down and bury their noses in the sand, and wait till the fierce wind has passed by; and the men dig holes in the earth, if they have time, where they can protect themselves. The danger comes from two sources, — dust and heat. The dust — finer than any we ever saw — fills the nostrils and lungs, causing hemorrhage, or bleeding and suffocation. And then the heat is so intense that men and animals wilt and faint, and at last die. I would rather be caught out upon Greylock in the wildest storm that ever beat against it, than to be overtaken by a simoon in the desert.

When the traveller sees the simoon coming, he immediately looks about for shelter. His tent could not stand before the wind. If he digs a hole in the earth, it may be filled with driving sand; for the sand drifts just as the snow does here. What he wants most is a great high rock, — higher than himself. If he

can get behind such a rock he is safe. It will keep off the driving dust; and perhaps there may be a cleft into which he can creep, and so hide himself. And this is what the hymn means, —

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me:
Let me hide myself in thee!”

Now I think you all know what David meant when he prayed to be led to a rock higher than himself; he wanted shelter against the burning heat of the sun and against storms.

But he meant a little more than this, or rather something *like* this. David is not thinking about an actual rock, and real heat and storm, but about religious things that are like them.

We are all of us making a journey through life, and it is somewhat like a journey through a desert. We meet certain dangers and troubles against which we need protection. And these dangers and troubles are very well represented by heat and storm. The dazzling and wilting heat of the sun may stand for temptation, and the storms may stand for troubles like sickness and death and great disappointment.

I suppose all of you know the power of temptation to do wrong, because you have felt it,—temptations to deceive your parents in order to please yourselves; to go skating or hunting birds'-nests, or some such thing contrary to their orders; secretly to disobey their wishes; to render false excuses to your teachers; to read bad books; to revenge yourselves, or "pay-off" those who have injured you; to pride yourself upon your better dress; to jeer at the peculiarities or clothes or conduct of others; to use bad language,—words that would make you blush if you knew a lady heard you.

Now these temptations are very like a hot sun in the desert; they so dazzle you that they seem for the time to be all right. And then all your better feelings and thoughts wilt and languish; and soon conscience begins to burn and prick you, and you begin to find out that it is a terrible thing to yield to temptation. Now at such times you need God more than you need any one else. You need Him to hear your repentance, for you have sinned against Him, and you want Him to forgive

you; and you need Him to keep you from all these temptations, and to shelter you against their fierce and blinding beams. At such times God is your rock, — a high rock, — under the shadow of which you can think and pray, and get strength for the temptations of to-morrow.

In Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe," which I presume many of you have read, you will find in the thirty-ninth chapter a beautiful hymn sung by Rebecca the Jewess when she was exposed to great temptation, in which are these two lines that we all ought to know by heart: —

"Be thoughts of THEE a cloudy screen
To temper the deceitful ray!"

And then there are the storms. I am glad that you do not yet know much about the storms of life, and I shall not say very much to you about them. But perhaps some of you have already had heavy sorrows; perhaps you have sometime lost a little sister or brother, so that your heart was almost broken. And some of you may have lost a mother or father; or you may have to work very hard; or you may have

sharp pain to bear. Well, these are storms; and when they come, all you can do is to fly to God,—just as if you were overtaken by a storm in the desert you would fly to some great rock near you. God will take you in His arms and comfort you, and hold you safe all your life through.

1879.

LAMPS AND PATHS.

THUS, when the lamp that lighted
The traveller at first goes out,
He feels awhile benighted,
And looks around in fear and doubt.
But soon the prospect clearing,
By cloudless starlight on he treads,
And thinks no lamp so cheering
As that light which Heaven sheds.

MOORE: *I 'd mourn the hopes.*

GOD shall be my hope,
My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet.

King Henry VI., Part II.; ii. 3.

OH, say not, dream not, heavenly notes
To childish ears are vain ;
That the young mind at random floats,
And cannot reach the strain.

Dim or unheard the words may fall ;
And yet the Heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.

Christian Year: "Catechism."

II.

LAMPS AND PATHS.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

PSALM cxix. 105.



F we were not so used to reading the Bible without thought or question, this verse would strike us very strangely. Commonly a light is for the eyes rather than for the feet, and a lamp is to read or sew by rather than to walk by.

But it was not always so. When David put these words into one of his Psalms, people read very little and walked a great deal, because they had few books to read and no carriages to ride in; there was more walking than reading. More than that, the roads were such that, if one had occasion to go anywhere in the night, it was necessary to take a lamp, both in order to find the road and to avoid the dangers of getting out of it. In all that land of Judæa,

where David lived, there was nothing that we would call a *road*, — that is, a good broad highway, with sidewalks and fences. There was not anything like a good “country road,” nor even like our paths through the forests where wood and lumber are drawn out. Instead, there were simply foot-paths or mule-paths leading from one village to another. They were easy enough to find in the daytime, but they were very rough; they were not “worked” at all. If they led to a hill or a precipice, the traveller clambered up or down, or went around, as best he could. There were no fences enclosing them, no bridges over the streams; and even in the towns and cities there were no lamps burning gas or kerosene. In the matter of travelling one had to pick his way over the country pretty much for himself. Sometimes he did not even try to keep in the path, but travelled straight on across fields, up hill and down dale, just as he liked. It is almost exactly the same in that country now. There is but one road that we would call such in the whole country. It leads from Beirut to Damascus, under Mt. Lebanon. If you were

to make that journey, you would ride in a stagecoach; but if you were travelling anywhere else in Syria, you would either go on foot or on horseback. A great number of tourists from England and America go every year from Jaffa to Jerusalem; but all must go on horses, and along a path that wanders here and there, over the hills and through the valleys, very much like the paths made by sheep and cows on our hillside pastures. As the journey is rather too long for one day, they are forced to spend the night on the way; and they are very careful to start in time to reach the stopping-place before dark, for if night should overtake them, it would be difficult even for the guides to find the path, and they would also be in danger of falls and bruises amongst the rocks and steep places on every side. But if by chance a party of travellers going from Jaffa to Jerusalem were to be overtaken by night on the way, there would be nothing for them to do but to light a lantern, and, holding it close to the ground, try to keep the path by finding the hoof-prints of the horses that have gone before them. They would hold the lamp

down low, about their *feet*, rather than up high about the *heads*; and so David, in this Psalm of his, speaks of "a lamp unto my *feet*, and a light unto my *path*."

If they had had such lanterns as we have now, that shed a powerful light all around, they might have held them up; but their lamps were very simple, — just a little earthen lamp with two holes — one in which to pour the oil, made from olives, and the other for the wick, which was of flax.

Such a lamp would not shed much light, — not enough to see far ahead, but only a few feet, when held close to the ground. I have heard it said that sometimes they fastened the lamps to their feet; but I can hardly believe this. When we see Dr. Jessup, of Beirut, we will ask him if it is true.

Now I think we all understand the text, or, rather, what is meant by a lamp for the feet. David says that God's Word is like this lamp. It shines all about our path, and shows us which way to go.

This text implies several things. By *imply* I mean this: if you ask for food, it implies that

you are hungry; if you ask the way to such a store or house, it implies that you do not know the way; if you call out for a light, it implies that it is dark about you and that you cannot see. If we did not sometimes use hard words and explain them, you would never find out what they mean.

So this text implies three things that I shall now speak to you about.

1. It implies, or means, that it is a dark world. It is a very good world; but there are some things about the world and about life that are very dark. There are some important truths that we ourselves cannot be sure of. There are many things that we know perfectly. We know that there is a solid earth under our feet; we know that we see one another, and that the mountains rise about us, and that the sun shines, and that the rain falls; we know that twice two are four. But we are not so sure about some other things. We do not of ourselves really know there is a God. We might guess it, and feel pretty sure of it, as the heathen do; but we might get no nearer

right than they. And if we did not know there is a God, we could not know how the world came to exist. It is a great puzzle now, — how all this beautiful framework of nature came to be; but if we had been left to our own guesses, we could have been sure of nothing about it. And in the same way we could not have known anything about ourselves, — how we came to exist. And so, if we had to trust to ourselves, there would be a great cloud of uncertainty shutting us in, like the clouds that settle on Greylock in November days; *we* know Greylock is there, but we can hardly persuade strangers that there is a great mountain within the mist. But when we open the Bible, we find that there is one God, who made the heavens and the earth and the animals and man. This simple fact throws out light, like a great lantern or sun, and makes a great many things plain. God made the world; God made us; God made all things.

But it is a dark world in another respect. Of ourselves we could never surely know that there is another life after this. We might hope there is, but we could not be sure. We might

make all sorts of guesses, as the old Greeks did about Pluto's realms; but they would be only guesses. But in the Bible Christ tells us that God's universe is full of mansions or homes, and that He went away from the earth to prepare them for us. We need not be greatly troubled about death when we remember that so dear a friend as Christ is to prepare our place for us when we die. If we love and obey Christ, the place will be with Him where He is, and all ready to receive us.

Now, nearly everybody speaks of death as dark, and the grave as cold and dark, and of the tomb as silent and dark. But when we read about death in the Bible, it is not dark. The light may not be very great; but if we hold it carefully in the way that leads out of life into death, we shall see the prints of Christ's feet, and we can safely follow where He has gone before us. There is a poem by Henry Vaughan beginning, —

“They are all gone into a world of light,” —

which you will read when you are older, and, I am sure, think very beautiful. He believed

what we have been saying of death so fully that instead of calling it *dark* he made it a *light*, —

“ Dear, beauteous death, — the jewel of the just, —
Shining nowhere but in the dark ! ”

2. The text implies, or means, that going through life is like walking a path in a dark night, and that the Bible shows us the path.

Almost all roads have names. There is Broadway in New York, and the Strand in London, and the Champs-Élysées in Paris, and the Corso in Rome ; and here at home we have Main Street and Church Street and Holden Street, and so on. Now, if we were to name the path of life that the Bible points out, we might call it “ The Way of God’s Commandments, ” — rather a long name ; but then it means a great thing. For all these streets that I spoke of are named from some peculiarity. Broadway is a wide street, — wide for New York at least ; the Strand runs along near the river Thames ; the Champs-Élysées is like a delightful pleasure-ground ; and the Corso is where the horses run races without riders or drivers, urged on

by dangling spurs. So we call the path of life "The Way of God's Commandments," because it is all marked out by God's guiding words.

This road is a very long one for most of us. It runs through ten, twenty, forty, sixty, and sometimes eighty years. It is winding, up and down, sometimes rough and sometimes swampy; and it is always blind and hard to keep except as we use the light of the Bible, where we shall find all the directions we need.

The moment one steps out of this path one is in danger; that is the strange thing about the path of life. Just so soon as we cease to hold God's Word over it and to remember God's guiding commandments, we get out of the road, and then we are in peril; for it leads through a region full of three things, — precipices and marshes and dark forests. Sometimes, when one gets out of this path, he falls over the rocks and lies bruised and bleeding. This happens when we forget the commandments of virtue, such as temperance and honesty and truth-telling and obedience to parents. I see young people worse off than

if they had fallen over rocks. A boy who drinks, a girl who tells lies, children who disobey their parents, will never make this journey of life in safety unless they make haste to get back into the safe path of God's commandments, that leads one away from all such things.

I think, however, there are almost more swamps alongside of the journey of life than precipices, and they are almost as bad to encounter. By swamps I mean the shameful sins, such as meanness, pride in dress or because one's father is rich, despising others because they are poor or poorly clad, bearing down hard upon those who are unpopular, or have some unfortunate impediment of speech, such as stammering, or peculiarity of appearance that the poor fellow cannot help; fancied superiority if one happens to be a little quicker or brighter; contemptuous or ungenerous treatment of others. I would almost rather see a boy or girl stealing than guilty of meanness. You can cure the former; but it is hard work to get meanness out of anybody.

I call these faults *swamps*; and how often

young people, and old too, fall into them and get all covered with mire, and yet go along the streets without knowing it, and as pleased with themselves as if they were clothed in purple and fine linen. The worst thing about *this* straying out of the path of life is that one does not know one is lost, nor how soiled one gets to be. But if one falls over a precipice, — that is, if one gets drunk or steals, — one knows it, and feels the disgrace; and it is a good thing to feel ashamed when one has done wrong.

The lamp of God's Word sheds a very clear light along these swampy places; and I will show it to you. It is found in St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, iv. 32: "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

And then there are dark forests by the side of the path of life, and a great many wander away into them. I mean by dark forests, forgetting that there *is* a path that God has commanded us to walk in; forgetting all about duty; forgetting almost that there is such a word as *duty*; forgetting all about prayer and

God and Jesus Christ and his teachings; forgetting what conscience says, and all the good teaching of home and the church, and going on in a heedless way, doing just what you like, and saying to yourself and others that you "mean to have a good time," — but don't you know that if one *sets out* to have a good time one never gets it? — this I call getting out of God's path into dark forests. Heedlessness, thoughtlessness, indifference, carelessness, — these are sad things for young or old. I would not have you anxious and doubtful and miserable all the while lest you lose the way; but I do believe that it is good for us all to keep our eyes and ears open in this world, and our minds and hearts also, and to think a great deal about the way we are going.

I fear there are some of us lost in just such forests as these. How shall we get back? When people are lost in the woods, there is but one way for others to find them, and that is by shouting. If one is lost on a desert or prairie, the eye would be used, because one can see farther than the voice can reach; but in a forest one cannot see far, and so must use

the voice. Well, if any of us are lost in these wild woods of forgetfulness and indifference, and want to get back to the path of God's commandments, all we have to do is to stop, and stay still for a little while, and keep our ears open, and hold ourselves all ready to start, and very soon we shall hear a voice calling to us: "This is the way; walk ye in it." And then, going toward the voice, we shall find not only the path, but a Leader who will show us every step of the way hereafter.

3. I will speak of only one other thing that the text implies; and that is—a destination, or end.

Every path leads somewhere, except some of these paths upon the mountains about us; do not trust them when you go chestnutting next October. That is what paths are for,—to take us somewhere. In Rome, two thousand years ago, there were guideboards on the main avenues leading out of the city, pointing to Germany, to Egypt, to Spain, to Gaul,—rather far-off places these roads led to, but they showed how great Rome was.

Life is not only a path, or a "journey," as everybody calls it, but it leads to a destination. Now, what puzzles me is, that anybody, old or young, should forget this,—that the path of life leads to something. I do not mean merely to something in the future life, but to something here in this life. It is as sure as fate; yet I see a great many persons who do not seem to have ever heard that life leads to something. I see young men and boys drinking and swearing, and reading bad books and vile papers, and I wonder if they know where such paths lead to. When older persons do such things, we call them fools. When we see a grown-up man staggering along the street, with his mouth full of oaths, we say, "O you foolish man, you know not where your path leads!" If he would take God's Word, and hold it down as a lamp about his feet, he would find them very near a steep precipice, at the foot of which are strewn dead men's bones.

I think one is never too young to look and see which way his path leads. But a better thing still is to say, "I will take God's Word,—

his commandments and all the tender words of our Saviour, — and use them as a light to show me the path of my life.

I said, at the outset, that the text implies that this is a dark world. Yes; but as we walk along this path year after year, we shall find it growing plainer and lighter and brighter every day; and as we draw near to the end of the journey, we can look ahead, and find that all the darkness is behind us, and that beyond all is clear and bright!

1880.

THE STORY OF A CUP OF WATER.

BE noble ! and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL : *Sonnet IV.*

RESTORE to God his due in tithe and time :
A tithe purloined cankers the whole estate.
Sundays observe : think, when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels' music ; therefore come not late.
God there deals blessings. If a king did so,
Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show ?

GEORGE HERBERT.

O LORD, that lends me life,
Lend me a heart replete with thankfulness !

King Henry VI., Part II. ; i. 1.

III.

THE STORY OF A CUP OF WATER.

"And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate ! And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David : but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord, and said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing : shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy ? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it."

I CHRONICLES xi. 17-19.



For any of my young friends ask why I have read this long-time-ago Bible-story as a text for a sermon to-day, I will not only answer, but thank them for the question ; for nothing helps a speaker at the start so much as a straight, intelligent question. I have read this story from the Chronicles, because I want to connect this beautiful occasion with some beautiful thing in the Bible ; for beautiful things go together.'

My main object and desire in this service is to have everything beautiful and pure and high. For I know how well you will remember this day in after years; I know how every feature and incident is imprinting itself upon your minds; I know how, twenty and forty years hence, when we older ones will be dead and gone, and you will be scattered far and wide, some in the great cities, — New York, Chicago, St. Louis, — some in California, and some farther off still, — I know how, on quiet June Sundays years hence, you will recall this Festival of Flowers in North Adams. You may be in some of the great cities, or on the broad prairies, or amongst the park-like forests of the Sierra, or in Puget Sound, but you will never forget this day. These familiar walls; this pulpit and font and chancel decked with flowers; this service, made *for* you and in part *by* you, — you will never forget it. And because you will always remember it, I want to have it throughout just as beautiful, just as pure and inspiring, as possible. The flowers will do their part; they never fail to speak sweet, pure words to us. Your Superintendent

always does his part well, and I hope you will all thank him in your hearts, if not with words, for his faithful and laborious interest in you. And your teachers and others who have brought together this wealth of beauty, this glory of color and perfume, this tribute of sweetness from mountain-side and field and garden,—they have done well; and you will remember it all years hence, and when far away, and perhaps some tears will start for “the days that are no more.”

But this occasion would not be complete to my mind if there were not linked with it some noble and inspiring truth. I want to make all these flowers and this music the setting of a truth, like a diamond set round with emeralds, or an opal with pearls. *You* have brought the pearls and the emeralds; *I* must bring a diamond or an opal to set in the midst of them. I am very sure that I have one in this old story,—a diamond very brilliant if we brush away the old Hebrew dust, and cut away the sides and let in a little more light upon it. I am not sure, however, but I ought to call it a pearl rather than a diamond; for there is a chaste

and gentle modesty about it that reminds one of the soft lustre of a pearl rather than of the flashing splendor of a diamond. St. John, in naming the precious stones that make the foundation of the heavenly city, omits the diamond, — and for some good reason, I suspect, — while the twelve gates were all pearls. Now, I think David stood very near one of those gates of pearl at the time of this story. To my mind, it is nearly the most beautiful in all this Book; and I know you will listen while I tell it more fully.

I have this impression of David, — that if you had seen him when he was young, you would have thought him the most glorious human being you had ever looked on. He was one of those persons who fascinate all who come near them. He bound everybody to him in a wonderful way. They not only *liked* him, but they became absorbed in him, and were ready to obey him and serve him, and to give themselves up to him in every way possible. I am not at all surprised that Saul's son and daughter and Saul himself fell in love with, and could hardly live without, him. It was so all along;

and even after he became an old man everybody was fascinated by him, — even his old uncles, — and stood ready to do his bidding and consult his wishes.

It was somewhat so with Richard Cœur de Lion and Napoleon and Mary Stuart and Alexander and Julius Cæsar; but the personal fascination of none of these persons was so great as that of David. In some respects he was no greater than some of these; but he had a broader and more lovable nature than any of them, for he had what not one of them had in anything like the same degree, — a great and noble generosity. David deserved all the love and devotion that was lavished upon him, because — let men love him ever so much — he loved more in return.

There was not apparently, at this early time of his life, one grain of selfishness about him. You know that the word *chivalry* was not used till about a thousand years back, while David lived almost three times as long ago; but he was one of the most *chivalrous* men that ever lived. By chivalry I mean a union of honor, purity, religion, nobleness, bravery, and devo-

tion to a cause or person. David excited this chivalric devotion in others because he had so much of it in himself. And here I will stop a moment just to say that if you want to awaken any feeling in another towards yourself, you must first have it in yourself. I think there is a very general notion that in order to awaken admiration and love and regard in others one must have a fine appearance. There is a great deal of misplaced faith in fine clothes and bright eyes and clear complexions and pretty features; but I have yet to learn that these ever win genuine love and admiration. And so far as I have observed, a true sentiment only grows out of a corresponding sentiment; feeling comes from feeling; in short, others come at last to feel towards us just about as we feel towards them. And I never knew a person, young or old, to show a kind, generous, hearty disposition to others who was not surrounded by friends. And I have seen — I know not how many — selfish and unobliging and unsympathetic persons go friendless all their days in spite of wealth and fine appearance. Now, put this away in your memory to think of hereafter.

It was David's great-heartedness that bound others to him. At the time of this story he was a sort of outlaw, driven without any good reason from the court of Saul. But he was a man of too much spirit to allow himself to be tamely killed, and he loved Saul and his family too well to actually make war upon him, and he was too good a patriot to give trouble to his country, — a pretty hard place he had to fill, I can assure you. But he was equal to it, and simply bided his time, drawing off into the wild and rocky regions where he could hide and also protect himself. But he was not a man whom people would leave alone. The magnetic power that was in him drew kindred spirits, and some that were not kindred who found it pleasanter to follow a chief in the wilds than to live in the dull quiet of their homes. But the greater part of them were brave, generous, devoted souls, who had come to the conclusion that to live with David and fight his battles and share his fortunes was more enjoyable than to plod along under Saul and his petty tyrannies. There were, in particular, eleven men of the tribe of Gad, —

mountaineers, — fierce as lions and swift as roes, terrible men in battle, and full of devotion to David. In this way he got together quite a little army, which he used to defend the borders from the Philistines, who were a thieving set, and also to defend himself in case Saul troubled him. It was not exactly the best sort of a life for a man to live; and had not David been a person of very high principles, his followers would have been a band of robbers living on the country. But David prevented that, and made them as useful as was possible. His headquarters were at the cave of Adullam, or what is now called Engedi. While here, the Philistines came on a foraging expedition as far as Bethlehem, and with so large a force that David and his few followers were shut up in their fortress, — for how long we do not know, — probably for some days. It was very dull and wearisome business, imprisoned in a rocky defile and unable to do anything, while the Philistines were stealing the harvests that grew on the very spot where he had spent his boyhood.

It was then that what has always seemed to

me a very touching and beautiful trait of David's character showed itself, and that is — *a feeling of homesickness*. Now, there is very little respect to be had for a person who is not capable of homesickness. To give up to it may be weak, but to be incapable of it is a bad sign. But in David it took a very poetic form. Close by was the home where he was born. There, in Bethlehem, he had passed the dreamy years of his childhood and youth amidst the love of his parents and brothers, whom he now had with him; there he fed his sheep and sang to his harp; and there, morning and evening, he gathered with others about the well, — the meeting-place of his companions, — loved with all the passionate energy of his nature, and still loved in spite of the troublous times that had come upon him. As David broods over these memories, he longs with a yearning, homesick feeling for Bethlehem and its well. And, like a poet as he was, he conceives that if he could but drink of its water, it would relieve this feverish unrest and longing for the past. It was a very natural feeling. You are too young to know what it means; but we who are older

think of these little things in a strange, yearning way. It is the little things of childhood that we long for,—to lie under the roof on which we heard the rain patter years and years ago; to gather fruit in the old orchard; to fish in the same streams; to sit on the same rock, or under the same elm or maple, and see the sun go down behind the same old hills; to drink from the same spring that refreshed us in summer days that will not come again,—*you* are too young for this, but we who are older know well how David felt. He was not a man to hide his feelings, and so he uttered his longing for the water of the well by the gate of Bethlehem. His words are overheard; and three of these terrible followers of his—fierce as lions and fleet as deer—took their swords and fought their way through the Philistines, slaying we know not how many, and brought back some of the water. It was enough for *them* that David wanted it.

Now, some people would say that it was very foolish and sentimental of David to be indulging in such a whim, and still more foolish in these men to gratify it at the risk of their

lives; but I think there is a better way of looking at it. If David had *required* them to procure the water at the risk of their lives, it would have been very wrong; but the whole thing was unknown to him till the water was brought. I prefer to regard it as an act of splendid heroism, prompted by chivalric devotion, and I will not stop to consider whether or not it was sensible and prudent. And I want to say to you that whenever you see or hear of an action that has these qualities of heroism and generosity and devotion, it is well to admire and praise it, whether it will bear the test of cold reason or not. I hope your hearts will never get to be so dry and hard that they will not beat responsive to brave and noble deeds, even if they are not exactly prudent.

But David took even a higher view of this brave and tender act of his lion-faced, deer-footed followers. It awoke his religious feelings; for our sense of what is noble and generous and brave lies very close to our religious sensibilities. The whole event passes, in David's mind, into the field of religion; and so what does he do? Drink the water, and praise

his three mighty warriors, and bid them never again run such risks to gratify his chance wishes? No. David looks a great deal farther into the matter than this. The act seemed to him to have a religious character; its devotion was so complete and unselfish that it became sacred. He felt what I have just said, — that a brave and devoted act that incurs danger is almost if not quite a religious act. And so he treats it in a religious way. He is anxious to separate it from himself, although done for him, and get it into a service done for God; and he may have thought that he had himself been a little selfish. To his mind it would have been a mean and low repayment to these men to drink their water with loud praises of their valor. They had done a Godlike deed, and so he will transfer it to God, and make it an act as between them and God. I do not know that those lion-faced, deer-footed warriors understood or appreciated his treatment of their act; but David himself very well knew what he was about, and you can see that he acted in a very high and true way. He will not drink the water, but pours it out unto the Lord, and

lets it sink into the ground unused, and, because unused, a sort of sacrifice and offering to God. Water got with such valor and risk was not for man, but for God. Much less was it right to use it to gratify a dreamy whim that had in it perhaps just a touch of selfishness. The bravery and danger had made the water sacred, and so he will make a sacred use of it.

If any one thinks that David was carried away by sentimentality, or that he was over-scrupulous, one has only to recall how, when *actually* in want, he took the consecrated bread from the Tabernacle at Nob, and ate it and gave it to his followers. His strong common-sense told him that even consecrated bread was not too good for hungry men; but that same fine common-sense told him that water procured at the risk of life, when not actually wanted, had become sacred, and had better be turned into a sort of prayer and offering to God than wantonly drunk.

And now, having the story well in mind, I will close by drawing out from it one or two lessons that seem to me very practical.

Suppose we were to ask, Who acted in the noblest way, — the three strong men who got the water, or David, who made a sacrifice or libation of it? It does not take us long to answer. The real greatness of the whole affair was with the three men, though David put a beautiful meaning upon it, and exalted it to its true place. Their act was very brave and lofty; but David crowned it with its highest grace by carrying it on into religion, — that is, by setting it before God.

I see a great many people who are living worthy lives, doing a great many kind acts and rendering beautiful services, but do not take God into their thoughts, nor render their services as unto Him. I think everybody must see that this act of these lion-faced men was more complete when David took it before God than as rendered for himself. Why, it might take long to tell; but, briefly, it was because the nameless grace of religion has been added to it, and because it was connected with that great, dear Name that hallows everything brought under it.

Many of you have brought here offerings of

flowers, sweet and fit for this day and place and purpose. Some may have brought them simply with the thought of helping out the occasion, or to please your teacher, or because it is beautiful in itself to heap up beauty in this large way; but if, as you worked here yesterday, or brought your flowers to-day, your thoughts silently rose to God, saying, "These are for *Thy* altars, — this glory of tint and perfume is not for us, but for *Thee*," — then, I think, every poet, every person of fine feeling, every true thinker, would say that the latter is more beautiful than the former. I hate to see a life that does not take hold of God; I hate to see fine acts and brave lives and noble dispositions and generous emotions that do not reach up into a sense of God; I hate to see persons — and I see a great many such nowadays — striving after beautiful lives and true sentiments and large thoughts without ever a word of prayer, or thought of God, or anything to show they love and venerate Christ. I hate to see it, both because they might rise so much higher and because at last it fails; for God must enter into every thought and senti-

ment and purpose in order to make it genuine, and truly beautiful, and altogether right. That God may be in your thoughts; that you may learn to confess Him in all your ways, to serve and fear and know and love Him, — this is the wish with which I greet you to-day, and the prayer that I offer in your behalf.

I found, the other day, some lines by Faber — a Catholic poet — so beautifully giving this last thought of our sermon that I will read them to you:—

“O God! who wert my childhood’s love,
My boyhood’s pure delight,
A presence felt the livelong day,
A welcome fear at night,

“I know not what I thought of Thee;
What picture I had made
Of that Eternal Majesty
To whom my childhood prayed.

“With age Thou grewest more divine,
More glorious than before;
I feared Thee with a deeper fear,
Because I loved Thee more.

“Thou broadenest out with every year
Each breath of life to meet.
I scarce can think Thou art the same,
Thou art so much more sweet.

“Father! what hast Thou grown to now?
A joy all joys above,
Something more sacred than a fear,
More tender than a love.

“With gentle swiftness lead me on,
Dear God! to see Thy face;
And meanwhile in my narrow heart,
Oh, make Thyself more space.”

1881.

THE STORY OF THE BOOK.

It is the armory of light, —
Let constant use but keep it bright,
 You 'll find it yields
To holy hands and humble hearts
 More swords and shields
Than sin hath snares, or hell hath darts.
 Only be sure
 The hands be pure
That hold these weapons, and the eyes
Those of turtles, — chaste and true,
 Wakeful and wise.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

BUT Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve.

CHAUCEUR.

IV.

THE STORY OF THE BOOK.

"Search the Scriptures."

ST. JOHN v. 39.



THE more I have to do with young people, the more do I find that they are interested in history; and for one, I am glad that history is now written in such a way that young people *can* be interested in it. It is not till lately that this has been done. In former times it was written only for adults, and too often in such a way as not to interest *them*, being full of dates and dry statistics of reigns, and of laws, and of the causes that led to wars, without much to say of the people, of how they lived and what they did. But all this is changed, and now we have histories that interest old and young; and one must be very stupid who is not pleased with them. There is Dickens's "Child's History of England," nearly the best

book Mr. Dickens ever wrote, and one of the best books of history any of us can read; and there is Coffin's "Story of Liberty" and "Boys of '76," and Irving's "Life of Columbus," and Higginson's "History of the United States," and others that I need not mention. And for older young people there are Walter Scott's novels, that give almost the entire history of England and a good part of the History of France, and two that will tell you all about the Crusades; only you must read real histories as well, so as to get the story quite straight. And there are Charles Kingsley's books: "Hereward," that describes the early history of England, and "Westward Ho" (that I forgot to speak of in my lectures to young men a year ago), which will tell you all about those first adventurers who left England in their little ships and sailed up and down our coasts and among the West Indies,—one of the most fascinating and instructive books in our language. Lately a German—Ebers—has been writing some very good books for young people, half history and half story, which, if you read carefully, you will know as much as

you need to know of Egypt and Persia. Now, if your minds have not been utterly spoiled by reading the Dime and other such novels, and those miserable illustrated newspapers, which men ought to be ashamed to sell, and you ought to be ashamed to read, — if, I say, your minds have not been spoiled by reading this miserable trash, there is nothing that will interest you so much as some of these histories. The history of almost anything is interesting; it satisfies our natural desire to *know* about things. For the mind is very like the body; it has an appetite and gets hungry. Three times a day, at least, the body cries out for food, and all the while the mind is crying out for something to feed it. That is the reason children ask so many questions. People often call it *curiosity*, as though it were some trifling thing, and not to be regarded; but it is instead a hunger for knowledge. God put it in us so that we may come to know something. Show me a child who does not ask questions, and I shall see one who will never amount to anything, and will grow up ignorant and stupid.

Now, as I said, the history of almost anything is interesting. If you have a fine dog or horse, you like to know all about it, where it came from, its age, who owned it, etc. You like to know the history of your parents, what they did when they were young, where they lived and travelled, and all that. "Tell me what you did when you were a boy," are nearly the most familiar words I hear. Even a stone may have an interesting history if you can find any one wise enough to tell it. Take some of these great granite boulders that are scattered over our hills, half rounded and with sharp cloven sides, — a strange history they have, — long journeys by sea and land, and terrible conflicts with frost and ice and water; starting away up in Greenland or Labrador on floating mountains of ice, and sailing south when the ocean covered all this region, till the sun melted their icy ship and dropped them just where you see them, — a very strange history indeed. I often wish some one would tell me about these "flints," or "hard-heads," that you see broken up by fire and water when they lie in the way of the builder or road-maker, — just as it is

said that Hannibal made a path for his elephants, over the Alps, by building fires on the rocks and then pouring on vinegar ; but I never could quite believe this story, especially the part about the vinegar. Hannibal was a very wise general, but he never thought so far ahead as to take along vinegar for making a road over the St. Bernard Pass.

So a *book* may have a history. Once a lady in Newport showed me a book carefully wrapped in flannel to keep out the damp Newport air, — a dingy, ill-shaped, leather-bound volume, printed on dull, grimy paper, in poor, blotting type, — altogether a very uninteresting book ; but it is worth hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars, for it is Eliot's Indian Bible. But one man in all the world can read it and know what it means. The Indian tribes for whom Eliot made it are all dead, the language is dead, and the Bible alone lives, — a few copies here and there, carefully cherished, and worth almost, if not more than, their weight in gold.

But I must begin to speak of what I specially have in mind, and that is, the history of the New Testament. You all have one, but

perhaps not all of you know its history. It is so common, that possibly we have not thought that it has a history; it is just the Bible, and that is all. But it has a long and eventful story, — between seventeen and eighteen hundred years long, and a history of a hundred or two years that we do not know much about, — only hints and guesses. Still we know for a certainty that Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, wrote the Gospels, St. Luke the Acts, and Sts. Paul, Peter, James, and John wrote the Epistles, and John the Apocalypse, or Revelation.

I speak to you young people on this subject because just now everybody is talking about the New Version, as it is called, — that is, a new translation of the New Testament just finished and published. What we older people are so much interested in, young people also cannot fail to wish to know something about, and I think I can tell you why we have the New Version.

Printing, you remember, was invented in the fifteenth century, and nearly the first book printed was the Bible, in 1460. As the New

Testament was written in the first century, there was a period of about fourteen hundred years when it was copied with pen and ink,—every one written out by hand! Think what a labor it must have been! And yet a great many copies were made, and nearly every Christian community had one; but they were read chiefly by the ministers and priests, and were often kept in the churches. Now, if everybody could have had a Bible for the first five hundred years, a great many of the corruptions of the Romish Church would not have existed. But there were only a few books, and not many people could read, and so the priests had everything their own way.

This New Testament, of which I am giving you a history, was first written upon papyrus,—a sort of paper made from the inner lining of a reed found chiefly in the Nile. These thin strips of papyrus lining were pasted together crosswise, and then pressed by heavy weights so as to make a smooth surface. A tolerably good paper was thus made, though not a very strong one; yet it answered the purpose. The main trouble was, it quickly wore out; for, as

but few books were made, each one was used a great deal, and of course they would not last long. Papyrus was used as late as the eleventh century, when the French began to make paper from cotton. But long before this — indeed, so early that we know not when — another kind of paper, called parchment or vellum, was made from the skins of animals, commonly sheep. It is used still for wills and diplomas, on account of its durability. But it was expensive as compared with papyrus, and we have no knowledge that it was used for the New Testament till the fourth century, that is, in three hundred and something. All the papyrus copies of the New Testament have perished, worn out or decayed; but in the fourth and fifth centuries it began to be written on parchment. How extensively this was done at first, we do not know; probably only a few copies were made till many years after. At any rate, there are only two copies in Greek that date back as far as the fourth century, and there are but one or two that belong to the fifth century. After that there are many copies or parts of copies. Besides these early manuscripts there are trans-

lations from the original Greek into Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and other languages, that are even older. The Latin and Syriac belong to the second century ; but, being translations, they are not so valuable as the old Greek copies. This is rather dry talk ; but I hope you will listen attentively, for it is well you should know what I am telling you.

Now let me say something about these two or three oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, written on parchment with pen and ink. Fifty years ago, it was thought that a certain manuscript in the Vatican Library, at Rome, that was made in the fourth century, was the oldest in existence, and it was named Codex (or Copy) B. For some reason a later copy, belonging to the fifth century, and now kept in the British Museum, is called Codex A, or the Alexandrine. Next comes Codex C, which is to be found in Paris ; but it is so faded that it can hardly be read. Then comes Codex D, written in the sixth century.

In 1859 a great German scholar by the name of Tischendorf became convinced that there were valuable manuscripts in the Greek con-

vents near Mt. Sinai, and so he made a journey there. To his great surprise he found an entire copy in Greek of the New Testament older than the Vatican B, and therefore older than any in existence. It is a very interesting story that he had to tell when he returned, — how he concealed his great joy from the monks (for he felt somewhat as Columbus did when he discovered America), and took the parchment to his room, and pored over it by the dim light of his lamp all night long, and how, afterward, he got permission from the Head of the Greek Church to bring it to Germany, where it was carefully lithographed and a few copies printed for the great libraries of the world.

Now I think you know where our New Testament comes from, — chiefly from Copy B in the Vatican Library at Rome, Copy A in the British Museum, and this new copy found by Tischendorf, which, because it is the oldest, is called by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *Aleph*, or the Sinaitic Manuscript. All these have been most carefully copied and printed, so that scholars have access to them. When a student of the New Testament wants

to find out exactly what its authors actually wrote, he looks over these three versions, — *B*, *A*, and *Aleph*, or the Vatican, the Alexandrine, and the Sinaitic, — and still others; then he looks into the Latin, the Syriac, and the Coptic translations; then he turns over the writings of the Early Church fathers, Irenæus, Clement, Tertullian, and others, and finds, if he can, the passage quoted; if they all give a certain passage alike, he feels quite sure it is exactly as it was first written. If they differ, he weighs one side against the other; and very nice work it is, for a great many things need to be considered. For example, if the Sinaitic copy and the Syriac or Latin translation agree, and all others disagree, the former, though only two, outweigh all the rest, though there may be twenty, simply because they are older; for the Syriac and Latin translations were made very early.

Now you will ask, Do they differ very much? No; hardly ever in such a way as to affect the sense, which leads us to think that the men who copied the New Testament with pen and ink were very careful, knowing how important was their work.

I will now try to tell you how the New Testament was first written. It was written in capital letters, without punctuation, — not a period, nor a colon, nor a comma, — and without division into chapters or verses or paragraphs. All this matter of punctuation and chapter and verse is a recent thing. The division into chapters was made in the thirteenth century by Cardinal Hugo, and the verses were marked off by Robert Stephens in 1551; and he had much better have not done it, for it has caused endless mischief and confusion.

Now about the translations; and this is the most important part of all. You will keep in mind that the New Testament was written in Greek, but the Greek language died out. Besides, Christianity went where Greek was unknown, — all through the Roman Empire. Hence, very early, a translation was made into Latin, and called the *Vulgate*, because it was for the *vulgus*, — the Latin word for common, or unlearned, people. But, by and by, Christianity spread into countries where Latin was not spoken, — into Gaul and Germany and Britain. Still, for a long time no translations

were made into the language of these nations. The Latin Bible was used; and when the preacher quoted it, he first gave the Latin and then translated it. Only the learned, who were very few, could read Latin; hence there came to be great ignorance of the Bible, and all sorts of superstitions and false beliefs took possession of the people, and the Bible came to be almost a forgotten and unused book. Even Luther had hardly ever seen one till long after he had become a monk. Translations were made in Spain and France and Germany, even before the time of Luther; but as they were not printed, but copied by pen, there were but few copies. In Bohemia, Huss translated the Bible, and was put to death for his work, — strange payment for such a service! Away back as far as 660 or 670, Cædmon, an English monk, turned a part of the Latin Bible into English poetry. And then, in 1381, Wickliffe made a straight translation of it into English; but you would hardly be able to read it, so much has the language changed since then. He was not burned, as Huss was; but after his death his mouldering bones were taken

out of the grave and burnt to ashes and cast into a brook — the Swift — that empties into the river Avon, which flows into the Severn. Hence that verse, — but who wrote it nobody knows, —

“The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea;
And Wickliffe’s dust shall spread abroad,
Wide as the waters be.”

But printing had not yet been discovered, and Wickliffe’s Bible was copied on paper and vellum just as before, and so it never reached the common people. Then came Purvey’s translation, four years later, and about the same as Wickliffe’s; and then, a hundred years and more later, Tyndale made another translation. Printing had just been discovered, and he went to Cologne and Worms, where he brought it out in type, little by little. When he took it to England it caused a great uproar and excitement. Everybody who could read and could get hold of it, read it; and it was said that if three men were seen talking together on the street, it was safe to say they were talking of

Tyndale's Bible. But this Bible was only the New Testament, and the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Old Testament. But in 1535, not long after, — indeed, he was at work translating at the same time with Tyndale, — Miles Coverdale brought out the whole Bible. This too was printed out of England, — in Antwerp. The first entire printed English Bible was eleven and three-quarters inches long and eight inches wide, and was printed in 1535, as I said, and again in 1537, under the patronage of the King. Other Bibles were printed, such as Matthew's and Taverner's and the "Great Bible," brought out under Henry VIII., and costing thirty dollars, and the "Geneva Bible," which was much cheaper, published in the time of Queen Mary. This continued to be used for two generations. Then, under Queen Elizabeth, the "Bishop's Bible" was printed; and finally, in 1611, the King James version, which is the one used up to the present day. It is a long time, you see, that this has been in use, — two hundred and seventy years. The reason is, that the translation was done so well, and that the language

has changed but little since. If you were to meet an Englishman of the time of Wickliffe, you could hardly understand him, but you could converse without trouble with those who lived in the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James. This translation was made by a large body of very learned men, and occupied seven years; but, good as it was, the people were so much attached to the Geneva and Bishop's Bibles that it was forty years before it came into general use, though it had the sanction of the King and the Church.

You are now all ready to ask why we have just had another translation, or rather revision, made. It is not a month since the New Version was published, and already millions of copies have been sold, and there is hardly a man, woman, or child in England or America that has not at least seen it. I think I can tell you some of the reasons.

1. The language has changed a little, and some words in the Bible now mean exactly the opposite of what they meant in 1611. For example, "let," which now means to *permit*, then meant to *hinder*. Look at Romans i. 13,

and you will see that the old version says just what St. Paul did not mean.

2. Though the translation was good, it was not so good as might be. Those old scholars did not always get the tenses of the verbs correctly, and they also let their prejudices affect their choice of words, — that is, they did not give the exact meaning of the Greek, but a meaning that favored their private views.

3. Since then, Tischendorf has discovered the great Sinaitic Manuscript, and other discoveries have been made, so that we know far better, to-day, what the original Greek Testament was than did the scholars of 1611.

Now, we may like or dislike the New Version, it may sound strange and all that; but when we read it, we get more nearly the exact meaning of what Sts. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul wrote than we do in the King James version. It was made by the most learned men in England and America, and has taken about ten years. It does not change the meaning very much, but it makes it clearer. In some way it seems to take hold of the mind more sharply, and one has more of the feeling that

he is reading something that was actually said and done. But I must confess I do not think it is quite so rich and beautiful as the old version.

If you ask, Had I better use it? I answer, By all means have a copy of your own, and read it along with the old version, to see the changes. But it does not much matter which you read, if you will read one. They mean the same; they tell us of the same Father in Heaven, and of the same Saviour and Master; they point out the same path of duty; they reveal the same heaven.

Two men, while on a sea-voyage, were one day conversing as to what book they would choose if they should chance to be wrecked on some island, and could have but one. One said he would choose Shakspeare; the other said, "I would choose the Bible,—*there is no end to that book.*" There is this strange and wonderful thing about it, that we never get to the end of it; and the reason must be that it tells of endless things.

1882.

FOUR JEWELS.

BE good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever ;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long ;
And so make life, death, and that vast forever
One grand, sweet song.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

WHAT stronger breastplate than a heart untainted ?

Henry VI., Part II. ; iii. 2.

SIGNS of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers.

Macbeth, i. 4.

V.

FOUR JEWELS.

"Thou hast the dew of thy youth."

PSALM cx. 3.



WE have had so much rain lately that we hardly need any dew ; but when the showers grow less frequent, the heat increases, and the earth becomes dry, and the flowers wither under the hot sun, and the corn shrivels, we shall begin to thank God for giving us his dew.

Now, a dew is nothing but a very fine shower ; the drops are the same, but smaller. Whether they rise or fall is a question, though we have been so long used to speak of "falling dews," that I presume we shall keep on doing so. The process is somewhat like this : the air has moisture in it, — particles of water cut into fineness by the sun's rays as if by millions of sharp knives, and so light that they float

in the air like bubbles, and perhaps they are bubbles ; but when the sun goes down, and these sharp knives stop playing upon them, they fall together and make a drop of dew. It is called *condensation*, which means growing thick and coming together, or a thickening together. It is a singular fact that the dew always goes where it is most needed, unless somebody or something shuts it away. The grass needs a great deal of moisture, and so it settles thickest in the grass. You might as well walk through the brook as through a good pasture, on a June morning, after a clear night. All leaves need moisture. Each one has innumerable little throats, and very thirsty ones, that drink sunshine all day and dew all night, — the only *topers* we care to have anything to do with, and very harmless ones, as they are chiefly water-drinkers. Now in Syria, where this Psalm was written, very little rain falls in summer, and the dew has all the work to do in watering the grain and trees and plants. All day the wind blows from the Mediterranean, bearing on its wings invisible bits of moisture gathered from the waves ; and when

the sun goes down, the little particles rush together, and drop or form on every leaf and twig and spear of growing grain, creeping into the olive-trees, trickling down to the roots of the rose of Sharon, bathing the great cedars of Lebanon in clouds of mist, and becoming almost a rain on Hermon. Very beautiful was the dew to those old Jews. They not only knew there would be no olives, nor wheat, nor grapes, without the dew; but they went farther in their thought, and saw the *beauty* of the dew, for nature is never so beautiful as when clothed in dew in the morning. I am not going to describe it to you, but I want you, some morning, to go into a garden, or, better, off upon the hills, and see what the dew does, and how much finer everything looks than it does after it is dried away. The dew speaks to two of our senses, — the smell and the sight. In the evening it falls on the blossoms and dissolves the waxy substance that holds their perfume, so that it floats away and reaches our nostrils. Flowers smell sweetest in the night, when we cannot see them. The sense of smell is our weakest sense; and so it

uses the darkness, when the attention is not diverted by sight, which is our strongest sense. Now is not this a very wonderful arrangement? But when morning comes, the dew, hanging on every leaf and flower-petal, — the only pendent jewel that seems to me beautiful or appropriate, — arrests our sense of sight, so that we care less for the perfume.

The main feeling that the dew awakens in us is that of freshness. The dew freshens everything, — makes everything seem new and *young*. Now this last word is just what I have been aiming at all along. The dew makes all things seem young. The morning is the youth of the day, — the dew makes it seem so, — and so David said, “Thou hast the dew of thy youth.” What he meant is, that one has a certain freshness and beauty and strength and opportunity in youth. I think I might condense this, — just as scattered bits of moisture are condensed into a drop of dew, — and say that *youth is opportunity*. And this is the one thing I wish to impress on you to-day, — that *youth is opportunity to do something and to become somebody*.

This opportunity belongs only to the young. When one becomes a man or woman, the full opportunity is gone ; one must, for the most part, remain what one is, and keep on doing what one begins to do. I do not see much change in people after they get to be twenty-five or thirty, except going on in the way they started. And it does not require much of a prophet to foretell the character and career of people when they have come to adult years. As I look over those with whom I grew up, they have turned out just about as they began. *Now* is your opportunity ; *now* is your chance to become the men and women you wish to be ; *now* is your time for beginning to do those things that you expect to do in all your coming years. But the thing that I am most concerned about is your *character*, because, sooner or later, everything turns on that. I do not mean merely that if one is vicious or indolent or low, one will make a failure of life, — everybody knows that, — but rather, that unless one early becomes fixed in certain high principles of conduct and feeling, one will not only never attain to them, but will turn out badly.

There is a great deal that might be said on this subject, but I will speak only of *four things* that seem to me to lie at the roots of all high character and attainment, and so I will give you four rules in regard to them; but, as I wish them to go a little deeper than rules, I will call them *principles*, — habits of feeling and thinking, as well as mere ways of acting. These rules or principles may seem to you quite commonplace, but that is the very reason they are important.

1. Learn to love and to speak the truth, and to hate a lie.

I consider the tendency to, or the habit of, lying the worst and most surely fatal sign that a young person can show. I know that very young children sometimes are untruthful, before the conscience awakes; but if, later on, they incline to lie, or to deceive, or to hide the truth, their future is very dark. I would rather a boy or girl of eight or ten would show any other evil tendency than that of deception. There are reasons for this that you cannot yet fully understand, such as these: society rests

upon truth, and a liar is an enemy of society, and renders it impossible,—the world could not hold together if all were liars; lying destroys what we call character,—a liar at last gets to be without character; he may possibly be honest and pure in his other habits, but he has no character, because the habit of lying blots it out, and brings him into a state where he cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. A man may steal, and he will always know that stealing is wrong; or get drunk, and he will always know and feel that it is wicked and debasing; but the habit of lying brings one into a state in which one does not know and feel it to be wrong, and at last into such a condition that one cannot tell the difference between the truth and a lie. It just destroys character; it is a sort of dry rot, such as we sometimes see in timber,—it looks sound and fair on the outside, but you can crush it in your hand. A liar seems to me just this,—hollow, without substance or reality; lay hold of him with strong, honest hands, and he crumbles into dust and nothingness. A liar comes the nearest to being *nobody* of all evil-doers,

for the simple reason that lying takes away from a man everything that goes to make up a man. In some way it seems to empty him of every other good quality. Hence "liar" is the worst name that can be given a person. Now, a liar is simply one who tells lies, any sort of lies, for any reason or to any person. Young people sometimes justify themselves in telling certain kinds of lies and to certain persons. They will tell fibs to escape detection and punishment when parents or employers seem to be severe and exacting; lies to get out of scrapes; lies to teachers, as though they were not so bad as if told to others. And this is often regarded as smart and keen; but it is all, from first to last, very bad and weak business, and, so far from being smart or keen, is very dull and stupid. But you say, "Do not smart and keen men lie?" Yes, smart and keen just as snakes are, and as venomous and disgusting, and as sure to have their heads crushed whenever they come near the heel of an honest man.

Now, the rule I wish to offer you is this: Never suffer yourself, for any reason, to utter an untruth to any person. Settle it with your-

self that, come what will, you will never lie. If telling the truth brings punishment, bear it like a man,—that is the way to become a man; lying is the way to undo manhood. If telling the truth turns you out of school, or out of a situation, or out of doors, tell it and take the consequences; they will not, in the long run, be so bad as the consequences of lying.

“Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie;
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.”

But I want you to carry the matter a little farther. Learn to hate a lie and to despise a liar; learn to love truth, and to be proud of yourself as one who will not condescend to lie. Truthfulness is a sort of moral neatness and cleanliness. When young people get to be about twelve or fourteen, they begin to be very particular about their dress and appearance; they are troubled if their clothes are soiled or ill-shaped, and, commonly, they begin to be particular as to the cleanliness of their persons,—face and hands, and nails and teeth: it is a

good thing and a good sign; it shows self-respect.

Now, truthfulness is just the same sort of thing in character. A liar is clothed in moral rags, and defiled with filth throughout. The dress, the fresh suits, the jewelry, the white hands and teeth, the artistically arranged hair,—these go for nothing if there is a spirit or habit of deception; if you say one thing and mean another; if you give false excuses; if, under some stress, you utter falsehoods; if you tolerate in yourself a low standard of truth-telling. I think there is hardly anything in this world so beautiful as a thoroughly truthful child; nothing nobler than a young man who has made up his mind that, come what will, he will not lie; nothing so lovely as a young girl whose every word is in keeping with strictest truth. The straightest, surest path to respect and confidence and success is through *truth*; and the straightest, shortest path to failure is through falsehood. No liar ever long prospered in this world, and there is no fate in the next world so fearfully pictured as the part of liars.

2. Learn to hate all impurity or indelicacy of thought or speech or conduct.

God has put into all of us a sense of modesty; it is both a grace and a protection. Nearly all I can say on this subject is this: respect and obey to the uttermost this divine law of modesty that you find in your minds; it is God's voice within you. I am sorry to say that young persons often make false distinctions on this subject. They will say to one another what they would not say to their parents; they will sometimes do that which they would blush to have known; they will read books and papers in secret that they know are unfit to be read and looked at; they indulge their imagination in thoughts that they would not utter; they will go just so far, but no farther.

Now, there is but one rule on this subject for everybody, — boys and girls, men and women, old and young, — and that is, *keep a rigorous control over yourself in this matter*. I might put it in another form: *respect yourself*. Have a rule about it; don't speak of, don't listen to, don't read, don't countenance, anything forbidden by this law of modesty and purity. It

is the glory of a man to have clean lips and a clean mind; it is the glory of a woman not to know evil even in her thoughts.

There is a border-land of simple delicacy lying between purity and vice, where young people sometimes feel at liberty to wander farther than is best. The touch is not so respectful as it ought to be, and, if too familiar, is not resented so proudly as it ought to be. Young people often wander about rather carelessly in this border-land, and come to no visible harm; but, after all, we do not like to see the down rubbed off from a peach, or even one petal of a rose crushed, or ever so slight a stain within the cup of a lily. But there is no fruit or flower in the world so sacredly beautiful as young womanhood, or deserves so delicate care to keep its glory and perfection. There is no treasure in this world so rich as the consciousness of utter purity; and in order to have it, one must keep one's self free from any contact that even seems to sully it. A woman should not only respect, but venerate herself as sacred, and therefore not to be touched, or spoken to, or treated otherwise than

accords with this sacred purity. And a fine manliness shows itself in nothing more clearly than in a chivalrous respect for woman, — treating her always, and in every instance, with a delicacy that reaches to reverence.

3. The third rule is about *honor*.

I mean very nearly what you mean when you speak of *fairness*, — the opposite of what you call *meanness*, — only I think *honor* a somewhat better and nobler word. For the most part, young people have a pretty keen sense of honor, so that the main thing is to keep it fresh and active. But it is something also that needs to be used with intelligence. There is such a thing as a false standard of honor, and it is apt to get mixed up with pride and conceit. Sometimes we are honorable and chivalrous to our set, and unfair or ungenerous to others, or to those beneath us, — though none are really beneath us. True honor makes us honorable to every human being, and even to animals. If I were to define it, I would say it is, first, a fine sense of self-respect, and then an equally fine sense of respect for others and their rights. Don't

pay much attention to your own rights, but be very careful about the rights of others. I wish all the older ones of the young people here would read the "Idyls of the King" by Tennyson, just to get filled with the spirit of nobility that pervades them,—especially as seen in King Arthur. And I would not object if the older boys were to read Thackeray's "Newcomes," in order to get a true picture of a gentleman. I myself am very fond of John Ridd in "Lorna Doone." It is a great thing for a young man to come into contact—either personally or through a book—with a man of high and noble honor. I do not mean one of these common creatures who manages to dress well, and spends his spare time at a club, and bets on horse-races, and drinks in what he calls a gentlemanly way, and gambles in what he calls a gentlemanly way,—this common individual is the farthest from being a gentleman; but I mean a Sir Galahad or a Colonel Newcome. I mean the man who respects himself too much to drink at a bar, or in a club-room, or in the way of "treats;" who has too high a sense of the rights of others to take their money on a

wager, whether won by a race or by cards or at a billiard table ; who is kind and truthful and pure ; who would lose his right hand sooner than do an unfair or mean thing ; — it is a great thing for a young person to come near, and feel the influence of, such a man.

I think that no one so utterly forfeits his character for honor, as one who in any way gambles. Betting is the most vulgar of all vulgar things. To put the money of another man in your pocket as the result of a wager or a game of chance, is something that no self-respecting man will do. “ But do they not do it ? ” you ask. No ; the habit puts one out of the class known as gentlemen. Of course, it should go deeper than this, and become a principle, — a matter of right and wrong. To take another’s money — as gamblers do — is next door to theft. We may take money as a gift, if there is just ground for it, — though we ought to be rather shy of that, — but to take it by outwitting somebody, or by an appeal to chance, has in it the very essence of dishonor and meanness. There is hardly any vice that so eats away manliness as gambling. Drunk-

eness makes worse havoc with the body, but it leaves one more a man.

But a fine sense of honor covers other things. It shuts off gossip and backbiting and insincerity, and all small and petty ways in social intercourse and business. It teaches one to respect others, and keeps one from prying into the affairs of others, from suspicion and exclusiveness, from disdainful ways and revenge and hatred. It utterly forbids tale-bearing, and "telling of others," and, of course, all untruthfulness.

This sense of honor is not something that you can put on and lay off; it must be cultivated, and it can only spring from a kind, true, generous, brave heart. If one has not this, or will not get one by care and thought and will, there is not much that can be done for him, and not much but ill can be expected of him.

4. The last thing I will name is *reverence*. This is a very high and beautiful quality, and the greatest; some poet calls it "the mother of all virtues," and I think he is right. I will not stop to analyze it, but will only say, in a word,

what it will lead you to do. It will keep you from all profanity; it will lead you to speak the name of God quietly; to respect all worship, and all expression of religious feeling; to treat all sacred things in a careful and delicate way; to respect the aged, the good, the wise, and those in high position; it will keep you from scoffing, from ridicule, from contempt of others, because God made them.

It is a fortunate thing if a young person comes into the world with a strong natural sense of reverence. It is the richest soil of the human mind; all good things grow in it, and it is a soil in which hardly any weed can find root, and the things that grow in it will last forever, because it is God's garden, and He never suffers any of His fruits and flowers to perish.

I shall not soon look into your faces again, — not for three months at least, — but, as I say “good-by” for the summer, let me add to my good wishes for your health and pleasure, the request that you will think of and remember these four things as the foundation of character, — *Truth, Purity, Honor, Reverence.*



1883.

THE GOOD, THE BETTER,
THE BEST.

A FLOWER, when offered in the bud,
Is no vain sacrifice.

WATTS: *Song XII.*

•
Look up and not down ;
Look forward and not back ;
Look out and not in ;
And lend a hand.

Motto of the Harry Wadsworth Club.

BLESS my children with healthful bodies, with good understandings, with the gifts and graces of thy Spirit, with sweet dispositions and holy habits, and sanctify them throughout in their bodies and souls and spirits, and keep them unblamable to the coming of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

JEREMY TAYLOR: *Holy Living.*

VI.

THE GOOD, THE BETTER, THE BEST.

"In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

ACTS xx. 35.



YOU all know something about the Koran, — at least, that it was written by Mahomet. If you were to read it, I presume you would find the greater part very dull, some parts of it quite absurd, and no part of it at all equal to the Bible; it is not so interesting, nor so beautiful, and certainly not so true. And yet there are many people who hold it in as great reverence as we do the Bible. They do not care to have any other book, and oppose writing and printing any others, using this singular logic: "If they contradict anything in the Koran, they are not

true; and if they say anything that is true that is not in the Koran, it is unimportant." Years ago I happened to read this saying of the Arabs: "Destroy not a piece of white paper, for a verse of the Koran might be written on it." And to this day I cannot readily bring myself to throw away the smallest bit of white paper; for I say to myself, "Upon it might be written some inspiring truth, or some word of divine comfort or human love." A friend once told me that her father, though a man of wealth, could not endure to see even a crumb of bread wasted, because in early life he had been wrecked on the coast of Arabia, and had wandered in a starving condition over the hot desert for days, when a morsel of bread would have been more precious to him than all the wealth of his wrecked ship. So here, already in our sermon, we come across a two-fold lesson: Don't waste white paper,—you might write on it one of the Beatitudes of Christ; don't waste a bit of bread,—it might feed some hungry child. Waste is a sort of selfishness; it is forgetfulness of the wants of others.

1. But we began to talk about the Koran. Yesterday I came across a saying of Mahomet, — I presume it is in the Koran, — “If I had but two loaves of bread, I would sell one and buy hyacinths, for they would feed my soul.” Now, Mahomet said a very wise thing in this poetical remark; it is very like what we ourselves are doing to-day in heaping up these flowers about us. You must not take it literally; he did not mean exactly that if a poor man had but two loaves of bread, — and Eastern loaves are not so large as ours, — he had better sell one and buy some flowers to smell and look at while he ate the other loaf. This might be very unwise, and leave him the next morning without a breakfast and with only faded and odorless hyacinths. Mahomet meant that it was not wise to spend all one’s money and strength and time upon one’s body. If I were speaking to older persons, I would say, the external life; but to you I say the body, and I mean by that, dress, and nice things to eat and drink, and pleasure. I would not use everything I have to get these, but would use a part to get something that would do my mind and heart good.

Now, I fear — indeed, I know — that many young persons care for little except these three things ; and boys and girls are much alike in regard to them. As to dress they want the most and the finest they can get, and often without much regard to the ability of their parents to provide it. Father may wear rusty clothes and last year's hat and patched boots, and mother go clothed in plain and home-made garments and featherless bonnets ; but the boys and the girls must have the newest and the gayest and the finest of everything they can possibly command. Now, where there is occasion for economy, I think there is something wrong when a boy dresses better than his father, or a daughter than her mother ; but however this may be, it is a great mistake for young people to spend a large part of what they have to spend on their dress. It does not matter whether you earn your money yourself or it is allowed you, — when it all goes to dress and decorate the body, it is a great mistake. And the same is true about eating and drinking. I have not forgotten what a young appetite is, nor how sweet is candy, nor how

refreshing are ices and soda in these hot days. I know what that generous feeling is that prompts one to treat friends, and that even keener joy of sharing your pleasure in these things with others. I do not condemn them; but I say, do not use all, nor half, nor quarter of what you have, for such things and in these ways. Keep the large balance for something else that I shall tell you of presently.

So, too, of pleasure generally. It seems to me the whole world, especially the young world, is running to pleasure. And I do not object to that, only I would have it pleasure of the right kind and got in the best way. I think we all ought to be very shy of *costly* pleasures, and we ought to spend but little money on our pleasures. I do not care how pure the pleasure may be, if it costs any considerable part of your money you must pass it by. One is on the road to all sorts of ruin who spends much for what we call pleasure; it empties not only the purse, but the mind, and at last the heart, and finally turns the body into a jaded and worn-out thing. No; if you have but two loaves of bread, sell one and buy

hyacinths for your soul ; if you have only so much money, use but a small part of it for dress, for nice things to eat and drink, for pleasure, and use the greater part for getting what will do your mind and heart good.

But you ask : What exactly do you mean ? I mean, among other things, this : instead of getting the finest possible dress, or taking expensive drives (a good tramp over the hills is better), or eating costly ices and endless confections, buy some good book,—a real, true book, well printed and bound,—and consider that you have sold bread and bought hyacinths,—that you have got something that will feed your mind. Or buy a picture,—a good copy of some real work of art,—a St. Cecilia listening to the angelic choirs, or St. George beating down the dragon with the spear of truth. This will feed your soul with thoughts sweet as the odors of hyacinths, and strengthen your heart with the bread of beauty and of truth.

I might mention other things ; but what I want to urge on you young people who are so beset by temptations to throw all your life and

thought and resources into pleasure of one sort and another, is this: have regard to your higher nature, spend for that; feed your mind with knowledge; keep your heart well supplied with such things as are beautiful and sweet and divine.

It was said of Wordsworth,—and I wish the young people here would put the phrase away in their minds as a kind of watchword,—it was said by Walter Scott, after a visit to Wordsworth,—that he found in his home “plain living, but high thinking.” You cannot have a better motto than this. Let the *living* go,—the manner and degree of it,—let that be as it justly may; but see to it that the *thinking* be high,—first pure, then earnest, dignified, serious, careful, and lofty in spirit and purpose. Shakspeare said nearly the same in one strong line,—

“Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.”

2. I now go a step higher, and quote a saying of a wiser man than Mahomet. Cyrus, the Persian, used to send his friends half-jars of wine, with the message that “Cyrus has not

for some time tasted any sweeter, and therefore wishes you also to drink it." I think you will agree with me that this is more beautiful than the remark of Mahomet. One tells us to think of ourselves; the other leads us into sympathetic thought of others. To treat self in the highest fashion is a wise and important thing; but one may do this, and yet be very unlovely and hard. It may be but a sort of refined and exalted selfishness; but this habit and word of Cyrus goes half-way, at least, towards the very highest Christian truth; it marks the point where natural feeling shades off into Christian principle. You know it is thought of Cyrus that he is one of those "outside saints" who constitute a part of God's great family; for God said of him, "I have called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." He was a great statesman and benefactor, and a friend of the Jewish nation; he provided Ezra with money and men to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple; and he confessed that "the God of Israel, He is God." All these things showed his greatness and goodness; but

this habit of dividing his good things with his friends reveals a still finer side of his character.

I think very highly of that quality and virtue that we call *generosity*; but to have it perfect, it must be mixed with sympathy. Giving good things to others because you wish *them* to enjoy what *you* enjoy, — what is more beautiful? What purer human joy is there than to go out into an orchard on some fair day in late summer and pluck a peach ripe, cool, and dewy with the breath of the morning, and, dividing it, give the better half to one you love best? or, in these June days, to gather a double-budded rose, — one for your friend and one for yourself? I think almost everything is to be hoped for one in the way of character who, when he enjoys a good thing, feels this strong and natural desire to share it with another.

Now the lesson is this: Share your good things; don't be mean; don't get off by yourself and enjoy alone whatever good thing you may happen to have; don't be satisfied with any pleasure that stops with yourself. If there is any fine thing to see or know, — a good book, a rainbow or a sunset, a basket of fruit,

the sweets which the doctors tell us we had better not eat at all, — anything and everything that is good and can be shared, divide it, and give a part to some one else. There is a divine arithmetic by which what we thus divide is doubled to us, — half as much, but twice more!

3. I come now to words better than any spoken by Mahomet or Cyrus, and I do not know of any better ever uttered in this world: “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” “Yes,” let us all say, “dear Lord, we will remember thy words; they shall be bound up in our memories with these flowers, these glad hymns, this day of June beauty, this happy festival.”

It is a good thing, as Mahomet said, to buy hyacinths, — to feed the soul as well as the body; it is a better thing to share our good things with others, as Cyrus did; but it is far higher, and something quite different, simply to *give* without any sharing or any receiving in return. This is Christian; this is divine. You

need not forget the first, and you must not neglect the second; but think most of this.

And so I have tried to lead you on from the Good to the Better, and then to the Best,—the Good for self alone, the Better for self and others, the Best for others without much thought of yourself. I do not expect that you will get as far as the last all at once; but I want you to keep it in mind, and remember, as St. Paul tells us, that our dear Lord put it before us as the best way of living and acting, and therefore the happiest way.

1884.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

VICE it is possible to find in abundance and with ease ; for the way to it is smooth, and lies very near. But before the temple of Virtue the immortal gods have placed labor, and the way to it is long and steep, and at the commencement rough ; but when the traveller has arrived at the summit, it then becomes easy, however difficult it was at first.

HESIOD, quoted in the *Memorabilia*, ii. 1.

WHEN some one asked Socrates what object of study he thought best for a man, he replied, " Good conduct." When he asked him again whether he thought " good fortune " an object of study, he answered : " Fortune and Conduct I think entirely opposed ; for, for a person to light on anything that he wants without seeking it, I consider to be ' good fortune,' but to achieve anything successfully by learning and study, I regard as ' good conduct ;' and those who make this their object of study appear to me to do well."

Memorabilia, iii. 9.

AN idler is a watch that wants both hands ;
As useless if it goes as if it stands.

COWPER : *Retirement*.

LOVE Virtue : she alone is free.
She can teach you how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime ;
Or if Virtue feeble were
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

MILTON : *Comus*.

VII.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

ST. LUKE xvi. 10.



THE sermon this year will be addressed to a somewhat older class than heretofore. In the six previous years — for this is the seventh observance of our Festival —

I have spoken to the children of the congregation; but to-day I shall speak to the young people. And by young people I mean those who are past childhood, and old enough to consider what they will do and how they will do it. A child only dreams of life; but when one gets to be sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen, one has some clear idea of the world and of one's own relation to it. It is to set you to thinking on this subject that I preach this sermon.

So far as I have observed, there are two ways of living ; or, I might say, there are two plans of life, under one of which nearly every one can be ranged ; or, I might say, there are two ways of beginning life.

One way is to come into this period of your life in a listless, thoughtless, careless way, assuming no new responsibility, making no plans for yourself, and so drift on into manhood or womanhood without any clear desire or thought of what you want to become or to do, and without any purpose to become or do anything in particular, save some general wish or hope that somehow and by some means you will get on well. There are a great many persons who begin life in this way, and live on in it all their years ; and I fear they are on the increase. They get to be eighteen years of age, — old enough to think and plan and look ahead.

“ What are you going to do ? ”

“ Oh, I don't know ; time enough yet to settle that question.”

“ But have you no special taste ? Is there no trade or profession or business that you would like to undertake ? ”

“ Well, I suppose I shall have to do something sometime, but I want a little fun before I go to work ; one can be young but once.”

“ But have you not yet considered the matter of doing something in the world, — earning a position or a name, or filling some useful place in society ? ”

“ No, I have n’t bothered myself much about such things yet ; it will come along sometime. I guess I can do something if I try. Time enough yet.”

“ But when do you propose to begin to think and act earnestly about your life ? ”

“ Well, I guess father will help me start in something when the time comes.”

“ But possibly your father may not be able to help you. Besides, is it quite manly to rest back on him ? ”

“ Oh, I don’t mean to do that ; I guess I am as smart as the average, and can take care of myself.”

“ But how do you propose to do it ? ”

“ Oh, something will turn up ; there are lots of chances.”

I fear lest some of you may be starting in

life with just such notions as these ; and it is a very bad way to start, because the same notions, the same idle, listless, thoughtless ways, are apt to follow one all through. I have watched the career of many such people. They get to be twenty, and have no plan or purpose ; but they must do something, and so they drop into the first situation that offers itself, without any consideration of their fitness for it. They take up their father's occupation, though they may dislike it ; or get a clerkship, but with no purpose or conception of becoming a merchant ; or, driven by necessity, select some easy trade or drop into unskilled labor, but save nothing, learn nothing, and keep on in a listless way, hoping something better will turn up. By and by they marry. This requires them to work a little harder and to spend more carefully ; but the question is now settled, and poverty and drudgery are their lot in the future. When men undertake life without earnestness and definite purpose, and so assume its responsibilities and tasks, they seldom rise above the point from which they start. Life henceforth is on a low level and a descending scale, and it is apt

to sink into vice, and to gather shame and end darkly. Only in the most exceptional cases does one, who at twenty is without earnest and definite purpose, reach any sort of success or good fortune. A person, boy or girl, who at this age is listless, careless, indifferent, easy-going, who is willing to remain dependent, who waits for chances, who trusts to luck without effort, — such a person will go on in that way to the end of life. The history of such persons is traced in lines of poverty, debt, struggle, abjectness, and degradation, — a down-hill path to the last.

This is one way of beginning life, and the way of a great many. As a class, they are described as those who “don’t amount to anything,” — a very expressive phrase. Take one of them and look him over. Physically he is nerveless, slouching in his gait, without force or fire or energy, probably somewhat weakened by bad habits. Mentally he lacks intelligence, application, and knowledge, lives in a small circle of conceited ideas, dreams, shifts his position, goes with the crowd, and takes up with every new thing or stupidly holds on to every

old thing, but is destitute of influence and is held in low esteem. Morally he is dull; if he is religious he is fickle and weak, but more often he is indifferent to religion as something too high and strenuous. The middle years and old age of such men are very sad, but it is a history begun without purpose and without effort.

A second way of beginning life, and upon the whole the best of all, is the way of *fidelity*. I name it by one word, but will state more fully what I mean.

When a young person reaches that period of life when he begins to act for himself, when he is forced to undertake independent duties, the *spirit* he shows usually determines his career. It is described in common phrase as "the way he takes hold." Now, the spirit of fidelity is about the best, the most hopeful, and the surest that a young person can show. There is no one quality a wise parent, or teacher, or employer is more glad to notice in a youth than this. He may not have the highest degree of intelligence, or talent, or force; he may not be what is called "smart;" but if he shows the

quality of fidelity, he gives better promise of a good future than he could in any other way. And by fidelity I mean, laying hold of and doing in an earnest, thorough, conscientious way the thing set before one. If in school the teacher sees that a pupil is conscientious and earnest, and tries hard to meet the requirements, he knows that such a pupil has the best elements of manhood. He may not be brilliant, but the teacher is surer of his future than of that of the brilliant pupil. So a parent or employer who notes in a young man this purpose resolutely and conscientiously to do his work just as well as he can, foresees a future for him more sure of good than any other qualities could indicate. It is often thought that smartness and great talent are the surest pledges of success; but it is a mistake. The brilliant men in college do not reap the greatest rewards nor reach the highest positions. The conscientious and faithful workers, who perhaps were considered a little dull and prosy, commonly outstrip them. The clerk that can sell the most goods through his bright volubility shoots ahead of his slower, plodding, hard-working, faithful companion at

first, and gets started earlier in business; but the other passes him in the long race of business life. Talent, gifts, special aptitude, genius, are good things, but they are not so sure signs of success as certain moral qualities, chief of which is fidelity; for God has made the rewards of existence to depend not on chance, nor mainly on gifts, but on *work*. The gifted man may succeed; but just because his power is a gift, and not an achievement, he may waste it. If I have great talent I may be tempted to trust to it and let work go: it is a very common mistake. But when a man steadily, faithfully, earnestly works at the thing given him to do, he stands in the only sure line of promotion and success, because things in this world are arranged in that way.

So, upon the whole, I would rather see a young person starting in life in this way than in any other. It makes little difference what you do, provided it is decent and honest: it may be the lowest place in a store or office, or some work in these numerous mills, or your studies in school; or it may be as an errand-boy, or doing certain duties at home. What-

ever it is, do it well, — resolutely, cheerfully, conscientiously, proudly, and in a better way than is required. To make it quite plain; suppose the work to be sweeping out and setting in order a store or office, or the care of a horse and stable, — a work that no boy need be ashamed of. Now, there are several ways and degrees of doing these things. There is the listless, indifferent, slipshod way, that calls out reproof, and so awakens ill-feeling; and there is the fair, passable way, — the work is done tolerably well, but not with thoroughness and heartiness; and there is a third way, in which the task is done even better than is required, — the store is cleaner, the office is more carefully set in order, the horse's coat is glossier and the stable sweeter, than the employer had reason to expect. And the work is done in a prompt, cheerful, wide-awake, hearty fashion, that speaks volumes for the future. When a discerning father or employer sees such signs he knows what they foretell. The employer may say but little, because he wants to see how thoroughly ingrained the quality is; but he waits and watches the significant process, and by and by

when there is a chance to promote he has a man ready. It is reliable and faithful men — men who do their work cheerfully and conscientiously — who are called to higher places. Intelligence is necessary; but such men nearly always are intelligent, because they have the qualities that lead up to it.

Fidelity is rather a homely virtue, but I assure you it takes a man through life in the best fashion, and it often lifts him very high. There are two great, universal names in this country that will never be forgotten, — Washington and Lincoln. The secret of the lives of these men was fidelity, — doing the first and last thing they had to do in the best manner and as a matter of conscience. Neither of them had what is called genius, but they had an idea of attending to the matter in hand to the best of their ability. When Washington was but sixteen he surveyed the vast estates of Lord Fairfax in Virginia, and his work is said to have been done in an excellent manner. And so he met every duty, — thinking little how it would affect him personally, and a great deal as to the best way of attending to the business in hand.

This is equally true of President Lincoln. In whatever he undertook, — splitting rails, tending flat-boat, keeping post-office, practising law, stump-speaking, ruling over the armies and the nation, — the same single spirit of fidelity, doing the thing in hand to the best of his ability, was always to be seen. See how it lifted the man, and how firmly seated he is in the gratitude and veneration of the nation! More than anything else it is due to the fact that when tremendous responsibilities rested on him, the people felt he could be trusted to do the right and true thing. Upon the whole, there is nothing people value more highly than fidelity, and there is nothing that is quite so sure to get its reward; for fidelity is what the world needs, and because it needs it, it will pay for it in the coin of reward and honor.

A more recent and equally striking example is that of "Chinese Gordon," who is now shut up in Khartoum, — one of the most remarkable men, and with the strangest history ever known. Beginning active life as an officer in the English army, he was set first at one task and then another, commonly as a military engineer; but

in whatever he was sent to do he showed such a spirit of fidelity, and did his work in so thorough and capable a manner, that when something greater was to be done, he was called to it; and so he went up, steadily up. He was in China when its great rebellion was in progress, — the most cruel and unreasonable war of modern times. A trained soldier was needed to put it down, and Gordon was allowed by England to enter the Chinese service for that purpose. In a series of campaigns that displayed a military genius equal to and very like that of General Sherman, he destroyed the rebel armies, whose wickedness and cruelty had no limit, and so rendered the greatest service to humanity that the century has witnessed. The highest honors of the Chinese Empire were laid at his feet; he was made a Mandarin of the first order. But he cared little for the honors or the treasures heaped upon him. He returned to England, and took some position at Gravesend, just below London, where he filled his house with boys from the streets, whom he taught and made men of, and then secured them places on ships, following

them all over the world with letters of advice and encouragement. After a few years a governor was wanted for the Soudan, or Upper Egypt. He entered the service of the Khedive, established order in that wild region, broke up the slave-trade on the Nile, — but only by immense labors and exposure to fearful dangers. He returned to England; but a false prophet having arisen in the Soudan and undone his work, he was summoned back to do it again and destroy the false prophet. And there he is now, shut up in a fortified city, surrounded by wild and fanatical hordes; but instead of hearing of his capture or death, we hear of his victories, until we have almost come to think that nothing can harm or withstand him.¹ The *peculiarity* of his career is that he has accomplished so great results with so slight and poor means. But the *secret* of his success is the absolute fidelity of the man to the work he has undertaken. He seems to be devoid of ambition; he cares nothing for praise or reward, and is indifferent to criticism. The only thing he seems to think of, is to do the thing

¹ October, 1884.

he has set his hand to. He is profoundly religious, has no fear of death, leads a bright, cheerful life, laughs at his critics, pities all who suffer, loves all men; but above all, he means to be faithful to the task Providence sets before him. There is something very beautiful in such a life. We cannot all come up to it, but we can all reach towards it, and can carry into our lives the same lofty spirit of fidelity. It is a great encouragement to young persons who stand facing life, to know that what is termed *success* does not depend upon talent, or special gifts, or fine chances. If it were so, it would be discouraging, because few have these special gifts or chances. Instead, success depends upon something that is open to all; for all can be faithful,—all can do their work in the best way possible to them. And God has arranged things in this world so that success follows from such efforts.

I would like to put the matter in a higher light than that of success. That is not unworthy, but you may connect with it a finer feeling. Consider what you owe to your family. Almost the happiest feeling possible to a father

is in seeing his boys, as they approach manhood, bravely taking up the labors of life in a faithful and conscientious way. And a thoughtful parent can hardly have a keener disappointment than to see a son who has come to manhood, resting upon him for support, listless, critical and fastidious as to what he shall do, too proud to work, mindful only of his own pleasures, asking only for money, and with no disposition to do anything or to become anybody. These are the things that make parents and angels weep. I trust none of you will lapse into such a state as this. On the contrary, I hope you are on the alert to avoid such a state, and already feel a shudder of shame at the thought of it.

Many of you are coming to what is called "the parting of the ways," — the time when the great decision of your life will be made. It is said of Hercules that when he was advancing from boyhood to manhood, a period at which the young, becoming their own masters, begin to give intimation of what they will do and become, he went out into a solitary place and sat down to meditate which of the two

ways that were open before him he would take, — the easy, self-indulgent way of pleasure, or the earnest and stern way of duty. He chose the right way, and then went on to do his twelve mighty labors. And so before every youth the two ways are open for inevitable choice. To-day you stand at the parting of the ways. What I want you to realize is, that just such a choice lies before you. When you get to be men in stature, the path of your life begins to divide. Heretofore there has been but one path, — the path of childhood, along which you have been led by parents; but now your hand is beginning to be unclasped from theirs and you must walk alone. And not only that, but the path divides into two, and you must decide which you will take; for you cannot take both, nor easily cross from one into the other. Decide you must and will; if you only keep on, you will find yourself in one or the other. One is the path of pleasure, of self-indulgence, of thoughtless gayety, of indifference, of ease, of indolence, — a path of beauty and glitter and fascination at first, but leading into dark and tangled wildernesses

where there is no pleasure nor beauty, but only fruitless strugglings and wild, hopeless wandering forever. The other path may be hard and stern at first, but soon it grows smooth and bright, and brings you good comrades, and though strait is full of constant reward and the deepest satisfactions. This is no mere picture, but sober truth and fact; and you cannot — each one of you for yourselves — consider it too earnestly.

I wish that this day of beauty and sweetness might be marked and remembered by you as that which led you up to the choice of an earnest, noble, devoted life. I wish that it might go farther than a choice of mere earnestness in labor and of ambition for success. I like to see that; but there is something I like better to see, and that is a life of devotion to the service of God in Jesus Christ. There is something far better worth thinking of than self and self-success; and that is — others, and service for others. Oh that I could see springing up in your minds that noble and lofty purpose which is the glory of true manhood and womanhood, — the purpose to make your

life high and strong, and then to use it for the good of the world! There are enough who are striving to get rich, and to earn that sort of success. Are there not some who will respond to the nobler ambition of becoming like Jesus Christ; some who see the beauty and glory of a life of devotion to humanity; some who are content to live for God and in God's ways? Will you not all rise out of the crowd of pleasure-seekers and worldly strivers, and say, "As for me, I will live the devoted life; I will serve; I will live for goodness and to do good; I will content myself only with highest things and the highest aims; I will live for God"?

ONE VOICE, BUT TWO MEANINGS.

Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low ; an excellent thing in woman.

Lear, v. 3.

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale.

King Richard III., v. 3.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,
and able also to bridle the whole body.

St. James iii. 2.

“Mr. Lincoln was much sought after as a counsel for the defendant in criminal cases, although his noted power over a jury passed away from him at once if he himself believed his client to be guilty. In one such case he remarked to his associate counsel : ‘If you can say anything for the man, do it. I can’t. If I attempt, the jury will see that I think he is guilty, and convict him of course.’ ”

VIII.

ONE VOICE, BUT TWO MEANINGS.

"Thy speech bewrayeth thee."

ST. MATTHEW xxvi. 73.



HIS story of Peter's denial of his Master is a very sad one, and I do not know why it was put into the Bible unless it was to help us out of trouble when we do wrong things against those whom we love and who love us. For we are all tempted sometimes to do and say cruel and unjust things to our very best friends. Nobody loves you so well as your parents, and you love nobody else half so well; and yet at times perhaps you say something to them that sounds as though you hated them, or you do something that looks as though you had no respect for them. You are very angry, and hardly know what you say, and they are deeply grieved; but they only look at you with sad eyes, and leave you to

your own thoughts. In a little while your anger passes away, and you begin to think over what you have said or done. Perhaps it is not till after you have gone to your bed. You gave your good-night kiss rather sullenly, and got one back that was very tender yet very sad; but when all is still and dark about you, you begin to think the matter over. You have known all along that you had done wrong, and now you begin to feel ashamed, and soon to be sorry. And as you recall the bitter and angry words and the sad wondering look in your mother's face, and then think of all her love and care for you, you begin to weep, as Peter did when he went out into the dark night, and you say, "Can I ever forgive myself? Will she ever love me again?" Perhaps you say, "What if she should die to-night, before I could beg her forgiveness!" Christ did die before Peter could tell him how he had wept over his denial; but after the resurrection they talked it over in a very searching way, and Peter got back into the heart of his Master. Now, I think this story is put into the Bible to help us out of such troubles as Peter fell

into; it tells us that if we repent and confess, we shall be forgiven and loved still.

But what I want to speak about now is Peter's *language*, and especially to show you how he said two things at the same time with one voice; how the same words contradicted themselves and left Peter in a very foolish plight.

All this happened, as you know, in Jerusalem, where Peter was a stranger. He had lived all his life in Galilee; and though he spoke the same language as that spoken in Jerusalem, it was with an accent, and in such a way as to show where he had lived. It was very much like a man from Yorkshire, in the North of England, going down to London, where the language is the same, but the moment he begins to speak everybody knows he came from Yorkshire. Now suppose he gets into some trouble and wants people to believe that he did not come from Yorkshire, and so denies that he was ever there; says that he does not know anybody in Yorkshire, and that he has always lived in London. All about him know better, because his dialect betrays him. He forgets

that the very words with which he says, "I did not come from Yorkshire," also say, "I came from Yorkshire;" for while we recognize plainly enough a dialect in other people, we seldom know that we have one. It was so with poor Peter. He was terribly frightened when he saw his Master arrested and led into the court-room, and he began to fear lest he too might be taken and put to death. He was brave enough at first, and would have killed anybody that dared to lay a hand on Christ; but when he saw the long rows of soldiers and the great palace standing out in the moonlight, and the angry crowd, his courage began to ooze away, and before he could escape he was recognized as one of the company that had come down with Jesus from Galilee. Now, see how Peter went on from bad to worse and at every step got farther into trouble. First, a maid said to him, "Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean;" and Peter simply answered, "I know not what thou sayest," — that is, I don't understand you. Then another maid said the same thing. This time he used an oath, and declared that he knows not the man; he will

not even name Jesus, but calls him simply a man, as though he had never before heard of him. After a little while others that stood by said, "There is no doubt about it; you are one of them, for your speech, or dialect, proves it." Then Peter—driven to desperation by his fear and anger—began to curse and to swear that he did not know the man they were talking about. First a simple denial, then an oath, then cursing; and the more he said, the more clearly he showed that he was lying. For as he grew angry he talked more and more like a Galilean. A Scotchman often speaks quite like an Englishman; but if he becomes excited in any way he falls back into his native dialect. It was probably so with Peter. Poor man! He little thought that his tongue told two tales, and that they were contrary. He did not remember that behind the first, plain meaning of words lie other meanings almost as clear and always truer. Now, you may say, "I shall never get caught as Peter was, for I don't speak with a dialect." Well, I hope you will never be tempted to deceive and lie, whether you are caught or not. But let us go a little

farther into the matter, and if you will think with me, I will try to show you how our voices always tell a great deal more than we suppose, and always tell the truth. Have you ever noticed that the sound or voice of an animal shows its nature, and shows also the mood it is in? If we were taking a tramp together over Hoosac some day in autumn, and suddenly should hear a heavy tread in the bushes and a deep, sullen growl, I think we should not wait long to see the bear, but would be satisfied with having heard his voice, and leave him to go his way while we take another, and that as fast as might be. The growl spoke of ferocity. The bear has but one voice, because, in his wild state, he has but one temper, and that is fierce and dangerous. But a dog has several voices, because he has different moods. When he stands stock-still and growls, it means anger and fight. When he barks in a rapid, full-voiced way, it means fun and gladness. When he whines or howls, it shows that he is troubled in some way. A hunter can tell by the baying of his hounds how it is going with the game,—whether they are simply on the

scent, or are in sight of the deer or fox, or are confused and don't know which way to run. All of you have watched and listened to birds; but have you ever happened to be awake at about four o'clock on a summer morning, and heard them all singing together and at the top of their voices? If you have, you said, "They are glad the night is gone and daylight has come again;" and perhaps you said, "They are praising God with a morning song." But during the day you have seen these same birds fluttering wildly about and uttering screams of terror; a little one has fallen out of the nest or been seized by a cat. If you were to go into the woods at night and listen to the sounds from birds and animals, you would not hear one joyful note except, possibly, from the song-sparrow, which is so happy a little creature that it wakes up at all hours and gives out a little peaceful song and goes to sleep again. But all other sounds are doleful, because they come from birds and animals that prey on others. Now, I think it is a wonderful thing that God has made the voice in such a way that it reveals feeling and dis-

position and character. Every animal that utters a sound shows what sort of an animal it is, and what mood it is in; and — what is more — it never tells any lies about it. A dog does not stand still and stiff and growl deeply when he is good-natured. The animals very seldom deceive, and — if we but knew it — that is one reason why we love them; they are so truthful, and so exactly what they seem to be. Sometimes, indeed, they learn to deceive a little, but for good reasons. Some of the weaker animals pretend to be dead when caught, for their instinct tells them that dead things are not wanted. A duck that is trying to protect its brood from the sportsman will flutter away in the opposite direction as if it had a broken wing, hoping he will follow it and so miss the little ones. But for the most part the animals never deceive; that is left — well, for you and me, if we are foolish enough to attempt it. And foolish enough it is, because it is so useless. We try to deceive, but we almost never succeed; because there is another voice that we do not hear, that speaks along with our tongue. We seldom can tell a lie, or put a thing wrong,

in a clear, straightforward, ringing tone. We hesitate, and turn around, and look the other way, and a certain unconfident tone gets into the voice; or we bluster, and repeat the same thing, and declare that we are ready to swear to it, and the like. I do not forget that Mr. Dickens says that a hardened liar will tell a lie with less confusion and a steadier countenance than a truthful, modest boy who has come under suspicion will tell the truth; but I think if you were to look into their eyes, and watch their movements, and notice the tones and inflections of their voices, you would find out which one is truthful. But now this matter goes a great deal farther. Our voices reveal our character, and show what mood we are in, and especially what we most think about; they show also whether we are truly refined and gentle and well-bred, or are simply pretending to be such. I often meet people who have put on what they call good manners; they speak softly and with many smiles, and are very yielding in their opinions. Well, it is quite natural to desire to please and to be thought well of, and I don't greatly blame such

people. It is better to assume good manners and pleasant tones than to act out all the roughness and gruffness and ill-humor you happen to have; but it is better still not to have these qualities, and then speak naturally. For an assumed voice or manner sooner or later betrays itself. It is not our lips that speak, but our hearts; and as life goes on, the heart teaches the lips to speak exactly what the heart feels and the mind thinks. I do not mean the words, but the thought and feeling behind the words. When a person gets to be forty years old, the voice and manner of speaking reveal perfectly the character and spirit of the man, and it is utterly useless for him to pretend to feelings and thoughts that he does not have. Every character has a voice of its own just as the animals have, and — strange enough — it is often like that of some animal. A rough, cross man growls in his speech like a bear; a lazy, stupid man grunts like a pig; a foolish, thoughtless person cackles like geese; and a wicked, deceitful person often speaks in a way that makes one think of the hiss of a serpent. On the other hand, I have heard

voices so sweet and gentle that I have thought of the murmuring of doves, and others so clear and true that I have thought of birds at their morning songs, and others so honest and brave that I could almost hear in them the baying of noble dogs.

These are wonderful facts, and I think what I have said about them may be of great service to you if you will remember it; for there is hardly anything that helps one along in life more than a gentle, firm, honest, sympathetic voice. It is more than beauty and brave bearing, and will go farther and last longer in winning and keeping friends. You cannot be taught it by elocutionists, nor can you assume it at will; for it is your character, and not your training nor your will, that gives the quality to your voice. So you must look out for your character, and actually *be* what you would like to have thought of you; for the way you habitually feel, the way you most think, gets into the voice so that every time you speak you tell others what sort of a person you are. You have heard how an ostrich, when pursued by hunters, hides its head in the sand or in a bush,

thinking its whole body is hidden. Perhaps the poor bird cannot find a bush large enough to conceal its great body; but in any case it is not more foolish than we are when we say one thing and mean another, or when we act and speak in a way that is contrary to our real feeling and thought.

When you get older and are out in the world, there are three things that will be of great value to you, and will save you from most of the troubles that men and women fall into; I mean *simplicity*, *straightforwardness*, and *truthfulness*. Nine tenths of the troubles that people fall into come from the lack of these three things. But if you early get into the heart of these qualities and get them into your heart, you will have respect and love and confidence wherever you go, because everybody will hear them in the tones of your voice.

LIGHT AND EYES.

WHEN first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like ; our bodies but forerun
The spirit's duty. True hearts spread and heave
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun.
Give Him thy first thoughts then ; so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

VIRTUE could see to do what virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. . . .
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' th' centre, and enjoy bright day :
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun :
Himself is his own dungeon.

MILTON, *Comus*.

GOD's goodness hath been great to thee :
Let never day nor night unhallow'd pass,
But still remember what the Lord hath done.

King Henry VI., Part II. ; ii. 1.

IX.

LIGHT AND EYES.

“ Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.”

ECCLESIASTES xi. 7.



IF it should happen to you to become blind, what would you most miss seeing? If you are fond of reading, perhaps you would say, “Books;” and I am half inclined to agree with you. But the blind have many books,—and some of the best,—printed in raised letters, which they read by the touch; for our five senses are made in such a way that if one is destroyed, the others strive to supply its place and do its work. If the eyes fail to see, the ears grow keen, and learn to measure distance by sound, and to tell the size of a room and almost what is in it by the echo of the voice; and the sense of touch also becomes so fine and delicate that a blind person

can almost see with his fingers, and can move about in a house as freely as one with good eyes. If you try to go about in a dark house at night, you lose your way, and forget where is the bed, or the window, or the door, and perhaps run against it; but a blind person actually feels objects before touching them,—a very strange but true thing. The smell, too, which is our dullest sense, and not much thought of unless it is offended, grows keen, and tells a blind girl almost as much about a rose as her eyes could.

But — going back to our question — perhaps you would say, “I should miss more than anything else seeing the faces of my parents and brothers and sisters.” Well, it would be a terrible thing never again to look into your mother’s eyes and your father’s kind face, for you will never in all your lives see any one half so beautiful as they seem to you; but tell me if you are not just as happy with your parents when you chance to sit with them in the evening, before the lamps are lighted, or when riding with them on a dark night? You get a little closer to them, and are just as

happy as if you saw them. Here, too, feeling or touch almost takes the place of eyes. A blind person will pass his hand over the face of another, and tell almost as well as any if it is beautiful or not. It is separation from our friends, so that we neither see nor hear nor touch them, that is sad. But so long as we could hear and feel them, or know that they are near us, we might get on quite happily even if we could not see them.

Perhaps you would say, "I should most miss seeing the earth,—the hills, the fields, the woods, the flowers, the grass, the brooks, the clouds, and everything else." I think you have now come a little nearer the truth; for you speak of things that the other senses cannot tell you about, or only in part. You cannot hear, nor smell, nor feel Greylock. Though blind, you might climb to the top,—for blind Mr. Fawcett, the English statesman, goes salmon-fishing, and does almost everything that other people do,—and when on the summit you might feel the pure, sweet air, and smell the pines and spruce, but you could not in any way know by yourself the wonderful

beauty of the landscape as it stretches away to Monadnock on one side, and to the Catskills on the other. Some dear friend might try to describe it to you; but I think it would make you feel as Burns did when he was very sad and heard the birds sing, —

“Ye bonny birds, ye break my heart.”

For when a beautiful thing is near us and we cannot get at it nor in any way come into the spirit of it, it is sad business. Or you might go to the Cascade, and hear it dashing down the rocks, but you could not touch nor smell it. You can take one flower and almost see it as you touch and smell it, but you cannot get at a whole field of daisies, and the whole roadside of golden-rod, and the mountains as they glow in October, and the grass as it shines in June. And as our Festival comes round, you could hear the music and smell the perfume, but you would miss the great masses of flowers and greenery, all set in order and harmony for the eye. A sad day is our Festival of Flowers for the blind!

I think we are agreed that, if blind, we should

most miss the things that are so great or distant that the other senses cannot get hold of them for us. Touch and taste and smell and hearing are *near* senses,—they tell us of what is close at hand,—but there is almost no limit to sight. You can hear some sounds, such as the firing of cannon, a few miles away; and sometimes a bell, on a still evening when the air is heavy with moisture, can be heard a long way off: but probably a sound was never made in Williamstown that was heard in North Adams, yet it is only five miles distant. All the senses except sight play about things near at hand, but sight is both a near and a far sense. You look down at a book or a flower in your hand, and by simply lifting your head you see the sun millions of miles away.

This brings me to what I think I should miss, if I should become blind, more than anything else; and that is, *the light of the sun*, or the light itself. You may say that there is no use in light except to see things with. I am not so sure of that. I think the light itself is pleasant to the eye, just as sugar is sweet to the taste and a pure tone is pleasant to the ear. Light

is made for the eye, and so it pleases it. Just try it; close your eyes for ten minutes, — they will be the longest you ever knew, — then open them towards the sky, and let nothing come before them but the white light in heaven, and then tell me if it is not sweet to the eye. Have you ever gone into a mine or a cavern, or — what is more probable — been shut in a dark room? If so, when you came out were you not glad just to get into the light? It was not because you wanted to see anything in particular, but because your eyes wanted the light. One sometimes gets into a dimly lighted room, — the curtains all down, or, if it happens to be evening, there is one feeble lamp or low jet of gas; how discontented and gloomy you feel! But if the curtains are thrown back, or full jets of gas are turned on, you are happy in a moment. Sometimes in autumn and spring we have, in these mountains, whole days and almost weeks of unbroken cloudy weather. We can see well enough to do all that we have to do, and we see everything about us; Greylock and Hoosac and North Mountain are there, the same as ever, but black and gloomy.

You look down the valley and up the glens, but they are so dull and dark that you are depressed, and you say, "They are not beautiful to-day;" but the lack of beauty is only the lack of light. At last the dull weather comes to an end, and — if you will but take notice of it — just as great a change takes place in the faces of the people. Their dull, black looks pass away, and their voices grow cheerful, and all because the sun gives them more and clearer light. Can you tell me why, on a summer morning just as the day begins to dawn, the birds burst into one universal song? And can you tell me why the first thing a little babe takes notice of is a light, and why it looks at it so steadily? I think it is because birds and babes and everything else that has eyes, love the light. Yes, even bats and owls; only they happen to be able to see with very little, and are blinded by excess of it. Doubtless they think the day is doleful because they cannot see, and the night beautiful because then they can see.

You know, or will come to know, something about Milton, who was blind in the last years of his life, when he composed his greatest

poems. In several of them he refers to his blindness in a very touching way; and it seems to be the loss of the *light*, rather than of the sight of things, that saddens him. In Book III. of "Paradise Lost," he says, —

"Hail, holy Light ! offspring of Heaven first-born :
I feel thy sovran vital lamp ; but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn."

In another poem on Samson, with whom Milton felt a deep sympathy on account of his blindness, he puts into Samson's mouth these sad words : —

"Oh dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first created beam, and thou great word,
Let there be light and light was over all :
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree ?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave."

Gray, the author of the "Elegy," says in another poem, —

"Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes."

I think we shall agree with the poets that in case we were to become blind, we should miss more than anything else the simple white light that comes from the sun, and for the reason that it is made to be the food of the eye; and if the eye cannot find it, it hungers for it. A blind eye is very like a starved stomach, and may be said to have an *appetite* for light.

Perhaps you will ask why God made the eye in such a way that it cries out for light, and why, if blind, it misses the light more than anything else? Why, you ask, do desire and satisfaction play about the light rather than about what the light reveals? For the same reason, I think, that the appetite, or demand of the stomach, fixes on food instead of the strength that food yields. Still, the desire for food was given us in order that we may get strength; and the love of light was planted in the eye because there is so immense use to be made of light. When God wants us to have something that is very valuable, He puts within us a strong desire, not so much for the thing itself as for the means of reaching it. This

may be rather deep for you, but think of it awhile and it will grow clear.

Now there is nothing in this world that, upon the whole, we need so much as *knowledge*, or facts; and the chief way of getting them is by using the eyes. The instrument with which the eyes work is the light, and so God put into them a love of it.

I have been leading you, in rather a round-about way, to three things that I want you to remember.

1. Be thankful for your eyes, and for the light that fills them. I have said these things to lead you to think, and then to feel, what a wonderful sense the sight is. While we ought to be thankful for our whole body and all its wonderful parts, there is special reason for gratitude for sight, because it is so immense a faculty, and because it does so much more for us than any other sense. You can see a star billions of miles away, and a bright grain of sand at your feet. You look at some little letters printed on paper, and you learn what happened a thousand years ago. All day long you are seeing things that teach, or might teach, you

something, and so you get *knowledge*, — the thing that we all most need. I do not understand how any one can begin the day without thanking God for the new light, as the birds do. And the reason I want you to be grateful is that gratitude is both pleasing to God and good for you; for gratitude makes you joyful, and grateful joy makes you strong, and so able to be good and to do good.

2. Take good care of your eyes.

I am sorry to learn that since books have become so common, and especially since fine type has come into use, and since children have been required to study so hard, and often in poorly lighted rooms, troubles of the eye have increased. Young people are growing near-sighted, or flat-eyed, or weak-eyed; all of which means just so much less knowledge and happiness and even goodness, because a person who cannot see far and straight goes without a part of the facts that help the judgment.

I wish you would all make it a strict rule never in any way to abuse your eyes.

Never read between daylight and dark.

Never read while lying down.

Never read books of very small type.

Always stop reading when your eyes are tired, or when they ache.

Hold your book squarely before you, and if possible let the light fall upon it over your shoulder.

Guard carefully against all accidents that may injure the eyes. The sight is the most exposed and the most easily destroyed of all the senses. Hearing is within the head, touch is distributed all over the body, and taste and smell extend over inner linings ; but sight stands out at the front, exposed to everything that comes along, protected only by a thin lid. Milton, in his poem on Samson, wonders

“Why was the sight

To such a tender ball as the eye confined,

So obvious and so easy to be quenched?

And not as feeling, through all parts diffused

That she might look at will through any pore?”

I think we might answer that as the eye gives us knowledge, we can use our knowledge to take care of the eye. God gives us two eyes, so that if one is destroyed we shall have another

still ; but if He had given us three or four, or a hundred, we might have become so careless that we should lose all sooner than two. God thus seems to say, " I give you an extra eye in case of accident to one, or heedlessness on your part, but you must take care of the other yourself."

3. Use your eyes for what they were made ; that is, to get knowledge.

The senses are our servants, and sight is the sense that chiefly waits on the mind and brings to it what it most wants. That is the reason why we can see so far and so much, great things and small. We first need to *see* things, then to *think* of them. In this way we find out what they mean, and this is knowledge. Now the more you see, provided you see thoroughly and think carefully, the more you will know. I wish I could make you all feel how important it is that you should have the greatest possible amount of knowledge, especially of the things that lie before your eyes. I think a wise or an educated man might almost be described as *one who keeps his eyes open*. Many of you read quite enough ; I want you to learn to

read the great book that is not printed, — the book of Nature ; for God made this book, and there are no mistakes in it, and there is no end to it. Learn to look closely and steadily, and, as it were, *into* things. Take a cobweb, some dewy morning, stretched on a bush, or an ant-hill, or a chestnut in its burr, or a lobster, or a bat, or a climbing vine, and use your eyes upon it, — always with the question *Why?* in your mind, — till you have found out the reason and use of every part. Mr. Darwin wrote a whole book on angle-worms. Professor Agassiz once gave to a student, for his first lesson, a fish, and told him to use his eyes upon it, and kept him at it a whole week without any help.

God has put us in a beautiful and wonderful world, and filled it full of thoughts and truths about Himself. The world will not last always, and we shall not stay very long in it; but it would be a pity if we should go out of it and back to God without knowing all we can of it, and of Him who made it.

That is what Light and Eyes are for.

A LITTLE MAID.

IN old days we read of angels who came and took men by the hand, and led them away from the city of Destruction. We see no white-robed angels now ; yet men are led away from threatening destruction : a hand is put into theirs, and they are gently guided toward a bright and calm land, so that they look no more backward ; and the hand may be that of a little child.

GEORGE ELIOT.

As aromatic plants bestow
No spicy fragrance while they grow,
But crushed, or trodden to the ground,
Diffuse their balmy sweets around.

GOLDSMITH : *The Captivity.*

X.

A LITTLE MAID.

“Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria : he was also a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid ; and she waited on Naaman’s wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria ! for he would recover him of his leprosy.”

2 KINGS v. 1-3.



THINK upon the whole that old stories are better than new ones ; I mean, stories of old times. It is perhaps because only the very best are remembered while the poorer ones are forgotten, so that those which have come down to us from past ages are the choice ones selected from a great number that pleased people for a while, but not well nor long enough to get fixed in their minds.

Of all old stories, I hardly know a better one than this of Naaman and the little maid from Samaria. It is full of human nature; that is, it shows that people acted and felt three thousand years ago just as they do now: they were kind and sympathetic, and proud and grateful and covetous and deceitful, just as people are nowadays. And the story has a fine romantic setting; that is, its incidents take hold of our fancy and charm us;—a little girl stolen in war and carried to a foreign country and put into the house of a great general, who falls very ill and is cured in a wonderful way, and so on. I think it will please us all to hear it over again.

Syria and Israel stood to each other very much like Germany and Switzerland. One was a great, rich country, with fine rivers like the Rhine and Danube, and a capital city so beautiful that it was called “the eye of the East;” while Israel was a small country, full of mountains, and with only one small river that ran nearly dry in summer. To tell the truth, Syria looked down on Israel, and—what is worse—often made war on it. In those

days war was even more cruel and senseless than it is now; for it was not confined to the armies that fought and captured one another, but extended to women and children, who were often seized, carried away from their homes into the country of the enemy, and made slaves. It is bad and senseless enough for men to stand up and stab one another as they used to in old times, or shoot one another as they do now; but to carry a mother away from her children, or take a little girl away from her home and playmates and make a slave of her, is something worse. But it was often done in those ancient days, as you will learn when you read history, and the story of the siege of Troy, which sprang out of stealing a beautiful woman.

There were frequent wars between Syria and Israel. Israel had once conquered Syria, and Syria had broken away, and so it went on back and forth, year after year. When our story begins, Naaman, a great general, had delivered his country from Israel, and brought home with him a little Hebrew girl, who was so beautiful and sweet in her ways that he gave her to his

wife on his return from the war. A strange present, you say, but it proved a very valuable one. It seems to us very cruel. One would think that if Naaman and his wife loved this little girl—and I am sure they did—they would have sent her back to her home, for she must have had a heart-breaking time of it at first; but people were not kind in that way in those days. Yes, I am sure they loved her and were kind to her, for the simple reason that she evidently loved them; and I am also sure that the reason they loved her was that they could not help it, as we shall see farther on.

Not long after the war, Naaman was attacked with a disease so dreadful and repulsive that I cannot describe it to you. Let us be thankful that leprosy is unknown here. It is not only incurable, but as it goes on it becomes so terrible that one cannot stay at home with his family, but must go out and live alone, or with other lepers, and wait for death, which often does not happen for years. It was a sad time for the great Naaman when he discovered that it had seized him. He felt well and strong,

but the fearful signs made it sure. It was a sadder time when he told his wife; for both knew that the day would soon come when they could no longer stay together at home, and that he must leave beautiful Damascus, and give up his place in the army, and go off into the mountains and live alone, or with others like himself. The saddest feature of all was that there was no hope: all this was sure to take place. If you have ever been in a house where some one is very ill and likely to die, or some terrible accident has occurred, you have felt what a gloom overhangs it, and have been glad to escape from it and get out under the open sky. But our little Hebrew girl could not escape. She must stay through it all, and wait on Naaman's wife, and see her weep and Naaman's strong face grow sadder every day. Now I think we shall begin to see what a rare, noble, sweet child this was that we are talking about. What a pity that we do not know her name, — for she is a nameless child! I would like to call her Anna if I had any right to leave off the *H* that the Hebrews put before and after this beautiful name. And

I should not change it by turning the *a* at the close into *ie*, as so many young people — and older ones, too, who ought to know better — are in the habit of doing; for I never could understand why girls with so noble names as Anna and Mary and Helen and Margaret and Caroline should change them into the weak and silly forms that we hear every day. This change, which usually shortens the name and ends it with an *ie*, is called a *diminutive*, which, according to Worcester, means “a thing little of its kind,” and so may well enough be used in the nursery; but that grown women should use it seems to me foolish and even ignoble, and I often fear it may indicate a lack of fine sentiment. We do not know the name of our little maiden, but we can safely imagine her appearance for two reasons: we know her circumstances and her character. Is it not quite sure that when Naaman selected from his captives a little girl to wait on his wife, he would take the most beautiful one? When we make presents to those we love, we always get the best we can. Now we can go a step farther, and ask what made her beautiful *in such a*

way that Naaman thought she would please his wife. It must have been her sweet and amiable expression; and that came from her character, for nothing else can make beauty of this sort. And so we picture her with black, wavy hair and soft, dark eyes, with red cheeks glowing through an olive-colored skin, lips like a pomegranate, a sweet, patient, loving expression, and a voice "gentle and low" and full of sympathy and readiness. I am very sure about her voice and expression, because I know her character. I never have seen any one with a loving and helpful spirit who had not a gentle voice and a sweet expression. I think she must have been about twelve years old; for if she had been younger she would not have known all about Elisha, and if older she would not have been called "a *little* maid."

When the trouble came upon Naaman's family, she felt it grievously, and was more attentive and gentle in her services than ever. Just here she showed the beauty of her character. She had been cruelly wronged,—stolen away from her country and home, and made a slave without hope of ever seeing them

again, — and so might naturally feel revengeful, and say that Naaman's leprosy was a punishment for the wrong he had done her. But instead she pitied him, and in her sympathy with his sufferings forgot her own. So, as she brooded on the trouble, she happened to remember one day that Elisha had cured people who were very ill, and done many wonderful things, and she said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." Probably Naaman's wife questioned her closely about Elisha, and got at all she knew about him, and so heard about the child that fell sick amongst the reapers, and the poor widow whose two sons were to be sold as slaves, and the mantle of Elijah that Elisha had caught upon the banks of the Jordan, with which he smote the waters. At any rate, she heard enough to awaken some hope, and so told her husband what our little maid had said. When people are hopelessly ill, they are willing to try anything; a drowning man will catch at a straw, and Naaman caught at this little straw of hope that the wind of war had

blown across his path. He thought it over, and said to himself, "It is my only chance; no one here can do anything for me. I will go down to Samaria and find Elisha. I have often heard that the prophets there did wonderful things; if what the little maid says of the boy amongst the reapers is true, perhaps Elisha can cure me." And so he went; but it was very humiliating. He thought of Israel and the little city of Samaria and the Jordan in a scornful way, comparing them with his splendid Damascus, and its green, beautiful plain, thirty miles wide, and the great river Abana, that gushed from the side of the mountain, and flowed through and all about the city, making the whole country one vast garden. He despised, too, the people of Israel. They were rude and poor and ignorant, while his own people were rich and cultivated. Perhaps he had borne himself proudly when he was at war there; and now to go back and ask favors — to ask for himself what he could not get at home — was humiliating indeed. But he made the best of it; and to cover his pride and make it seem as though he were not asking

favours, he took with him an immense amount of silver and gold, and ten suits of raiment, — perhaps of linen *damask*, that was first made in Damascus.

I shall not follow the story farther, except to say that because Naaman went in such a proud spirit, Elisha used every means to make him humble. He seemed to be anxious to send Naaman home, not only a well, but a better man, and to teach him that there were other things to be thought of than great rivers, and fine cities, and temples of Rimmon. Especially he wanted to teach him that the one, true God could make a small, rough nation greater and stronger than one that worshipped idols. Naaman went home cured of his leprosy, with some earth to make an altar of, and all his gold and silver and fine garments, except what the foolish Gehazi got from him by lying. How Naaman proposed to act when he should get home and be forced to go with the king into the temple of Rimmon, you will find discussed in the second chapter of the second part of "School Days at Rugby." My opinion is that Elisha told him he must settle that

matter with his own conscience; but I can imagine that when he had worshipped God before the altar built of the earth brought from the Jordan, and then went into the temple of Rimmon and did what the king did, his conscience must have troubled him.

But I care a great deal more for our little maid than for Naaman. I wonder what became of her. If Naaman did what he ought, he sent her back to her home, and gave her all the gold and silver he had offered to Elisha. I am quite inclined to believe this for several reasons. Naaman was a *reasonable* man. When he was told to "go and wash himself seven times in Jordan," he was surprised and angry, because it was so different from what he had expected, and because he thought it was an insult to his own great rivers. But when his servants reminded him that it was just as easy to do a little thing as a great thing, he saw the wisdom of it, and let good sense triumph over pride. He was also a *generous* man, as the gifts he offered to Elisha show. And he was *conscientious*, or he would not have asked Elisha about bowing down in the temple of Rimmon as a part of

his duty to the king. All through he showed himself *grateful*. Yes ; I think he went back to Syria not only with "the flesh of a little child," but with a child's heart. And because he was reasonable and generous and conscientious and grateful, he did not forget the little maid who was at the bottom of the whole affair. He owed quite as much to her as to Elisha ; for people who start good enterprises deserve more praise and reward than those who carry them out. So, when he reached home and met his wife and children, — why, it was almost like coming back from the dead ! — his first thought must have been of the little maid. We can imagine the great Naaman taking her in his arms with tears, and saying, "What can I do for you, my little maid ? Tell me what you most want, and I will give it to you, even if it is the half of my possessions." We know that Eastern princes often said such things when their fancy or their gratitude was deeply stirred : they gave full course to all their feelings, good and bad. Perhaps she had become fond of Naaman's wife, and would like to stay with her. Perhaps they told her

they would adopt her, and clothe her with rich damask and jewels of gold and silver. But I doubt if she was a child who cared more for such things than for her parents and her home. And as she heard the story of Naaman's cure, and of Elisha and the Jordan, her mind went back to her native land and to her home, and a great longing filled her heart to see it again, and to live the old life with her parents and brothers and sisters. The Jews do not easily forget their country nor their families; and this little maid was a true Jewess. It might be a fine thing to live in a palace and wear jewels, but she would rather go home, and tend the sheep and goats, and pick the grapes, and go to the fountain for water. Perhaps she had lived on the slope of Hermon, where the dew fell heavily every night, and the brooks ran full all summer; for Naaman's march home led near it.

We found her in Damascus a slave; but we will leave her at home amongst the vines and flowers and kids, with father and mother and mates, for she was a child who lived in her affections rather than in her ambitions.

The chief thing she teaches us is the beauty and blessedness of returning good for evil. Long before Christ's day she was Christ's own child; for she loved her enemies, and prayed for those who had persecuted her.

VOWS ASSUMED.

DRAW, Holy Ghost, thy sevenfold veil
Between us and the fires of youth ;
Breathe, Holy Ghost, thy freshening gale,
Our fevered brow in age to soothe.

And oft as sin and sorrow tire,
The hallowed hour do Thou renew,
When beckoned up the awful choir
By pastoral hands, toward Thee we drew ;

When trembling at the sacred rail
We hid our eyes and held our breath,
Felt Thee how strong, our hearts how frail,
And longed to own Thee to the death.

Forever on our souls be traced
That blessing dear, that dovelike hand,
A sheltering rock in Memory's waste,
O'ershadowing all the weary land.

Christian Year: "Confirmation."

XI.

VOWS ASSUMED.¹

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 14.



THE day on which one publicly confesses Christ and enters his Church is a day equalled by only a few in the whole life. The day of birth, the day when home is left and the world entered alone, the day of marriage, the day of death, — it is with such days that this is to be reckoned. And yet, what you do to-day is very simple. You have come to this Church, where you have come for years, some of you since your earliest remembrance; you sit in the presence of this table of our Lord;

¹ This discourse is a Pastoral Address made to a large number of young persons who entered into the Church in March, 1883.

you rise to confess your faith in Christ, and to pledge yourselves to His service forever; you enter into a covenant with this church to worship with it, to unite your life with the lives of its members for common ends of Christian service and fellowship. You openly consecrate yourselves to the service of God; you take Him, by your own act, as your God and Father, and put your life in accord with this relation; you accept Christ as your Saviour and Guide and Friend,—as the Way you are to live, the Truth you are to know, the Life you are to become one with. This is all that you do to-day,—a very simple thing, and yet a very great thing. It is a simple thing for the sun to rise,—it is merely the earth turning on its axis a little farther,—but how great the change! Darkness gone and day come, the blindness of night past and the clearness of light about us. So this brief hour brings to you a change almost as great; and yet, in another sense, this act is no change. It does not change the nature of duty. You are under no obligation to do anything that you were not under before. If there was anything that was right and proper

for you to do in the past, it is right and proper still. You are under no stricter rule now, than you have been. What would be sin now, was sin in the past; what was right then, is right now. What it is right to do, what places it is right to visit, what companions it is right to have, what habits to foster, what language to use, what pleasures to indulge in, what books to read, what manner of life to live at home, what spirit to possess and to show, how to employ your time, how to spend your Sundays, what feeling you should cherish towards God, what service render to Christ,—all these have undergone no change. Duty never changes; right is always right, and wrong is always wrong.

And yet, in another sense, your relation to your duties—to right and wrong in conduct and feeling—*is* changed. You confess that duty is duty; you take sides with duty; you choose duty; you pledge yourselves to it; you declare that you love it and will forever seek to do it.

There is another change. When we thus enter the Church, we define our duties; the

act itself defines them. There is a wide difference between a general sense of duty such as we are trained up in, and a sharp, personal acceptance of duty in our own minds and wills and hearts. You who are now taking these vows of Christian living upon you, have all been trained in Christian ways. Unless I am mistaken, there is not one of you who has trodden duty under foot, and deliberately followed evil ways. It is the main source of our hope and confidence in you that it is so, — that you have been reared in Christian homes and by Christian teachers, and have come into the Church from these homes and the Sunday-school, already impregnated with its spirit and accustomed to its methods. Still, it is necessary that our general sense of duty should become a definite and personal sense of it. Just as in the other departments of life, there is a time when we must take the teachings of the home and of the school and adopt them for our own by an act of the will, so is it here. You, to-day, put the seal of your approval on your Christian education; you say, "I take upon myself and for myself all these

duties in which I have been trained ;” you declare that in your deepest heart you embrace God’s service as your highest joy and most abiding duty. You draw afresh, to-day, the line between right and wrong, — you draw it for yourselves, no longer taking it from your parents and teachers. And so you are to expect henceforth that right-doing will be a very clear and definite thing, and wrong-doing a very clear and definite thing. You have, in a sense, taken your character and destiny into your own hands.

In another respect, also, is your position altered by what you do to-day. You come face to face with all that the Gospel means. I do not believe that one often realizes what the Gospel is, what Christ is, what humanity is, what duty is, what love and sympathy are, except through the Church ; it is a natural and a necessary relation for understanding Christian truth and facts. Just as one cannot fully understand the home except by living in it, by being a child and a brother or sister, so here, we must be in the Church to understand Christian truths and share in Christian joys and hopes. It is

through the Church that these truths and facts are brought out and made real ; when we are in the Church, we are near them, we feel them, we discover their reality ; or, in ordinary phrase, the Church is a means of grace. I wish to impress this upon your minds and to make it very clear and real to you. You enter the Church, not simply because it is your duty to do so, nor yet merely as a means of doing good, for the Church is something more than a society for doing good, but because the Church is your true and natural place. God made us to be in the Church, and provided the Church because we need it. Hence, in ancient days, endearing names were given to it. It was called the "Lamb's Wife" and the "Mother of us all," its members are brethren, and thus the tenderness of these natural relations is thrown about our relation to the Church ; it is a mother to us, we are under her fostering care, we repose in her love, we are within the enclosure of her tender influence. You, to-day, come fully into this relation. You will not at once feel all its power, nor reap all its benefits. You will awake to-morrow and see no great change ; you may be inclined

to say, as days go on, that it has done you no good. But this is not the way to test the value of any natural relation. You are rather to assume that, being in the Church, you are where God would have you,—in your right place, just as you are in this world,—and so the good will be wrought out in you. It is by living on, year after year, in this relation, doing your duty, yielding yourself up to all the good influences and teachings of the Church, sharing its life, striving towards its high standards, dwelling steadily under the full light of what the Church means,—it is thus that you will reap the benefit of what you to-day do. You may not perceive, next month or next year, any great advantage; but trust me when I assure you that after five or ten or twenty years you will be immensely better in every way for being in the Church. It will be an intellectual benefit to you. There is no educator like the pulpit and the study of themes suggested by the Church. It will steady you morally; the relation itself will keep you from many temptations and will foster good habits. But more than this, it keeps you in close contact with the great

spiritual and moral facts of the Faith, — God, Christ, prayer, faith, love, patience, humility, service, truth, fidelity. You cannot live in contact with these facts and truths without being shaped by them. The power of eternity thus comes to invest you; you learn what spiritual and eternal things are; you come, at last, to have a faith that supports you; you know God, you trust Him, you feel His presence, you lean on Him; and when the great trials of life overtake you, you have a refuge and a hope.

This is the advantage of being in a church. It is not gained at once; it is not gained at all without due effort and co-operation; but it is the end designed, and it is fitted to secure it.

As I look into your faces, all turned towards the morning sun of life, all just come to a full sense of your personality and of your work in life, your future to be created, of nothing am I so sure as that you are, to-day, doing that which will tend more to make that future safe and happy and in every way successful, than any other possible thing you could do. I look forward into that future; and while I

cannot see it as exempt from fault and mistake and sin and trouble and calamity, I can see you contending with evil and calamity, and victorious over them; I can see you virtuous, true, self-governed, strong for the right, useful, tender, humane, helpful, reverent, spiritual, Christ-like, — growing in these directions, always away from the evil and towards the good, and so passing on into your years, — evidently God's children, and with the marks of your Master imprinted on you. May this be true of you all!

Let me now add one or two words of more specific advice.

1. Never doubt the wisdom of what you now do, if you are consciously honest in it. No matter what you do, where you drift, what becomes of your faith, what evil you may fall into, do not allow yourself to turn on the act of to-day with self-reproach. What you are doing is right and wise. It is a step taken towards God; it is putting your hand in the hand of your Eternal Friend. There can be no mistake in such an act. If there shall be

mistake, it will be in the undoing and denial of this present act. Whatever else you may be tempted to think and feel, think of to-day's work as unalterably and eternally right.

2. Let me urge you to surround your lives with a good set of habits. The gross sins, the evil speech, the impure word, the low thought and act, the bad temper, the spirit of revenge, the isolating pride, — all these you will avoid of course. But beyond these negative virtues, have positive Christian habits. Speak charitably of, and kindly to, all. Cultivate a helpful spirit. Strive to be always and everywhere useful. Crush out, if you happen to have it, any ingrained selfishness. Strive with daily effort and prayer and untiring energy after the Christ-like spirit of love and heavenly obedience. To help you in this, read and study the Bible constantly ; for thus only do we keep ourselves mindful of these things. Study specially the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of St. John in its last chapters, — from the tenth onward, — the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the thirteenth of First Corinthians,

the Epistles of St. James and St. John. And to such a habit of Bible-reading join the habit of prayer. The devout spirit will always be looking up to heaven; the true child of God is never unmindful of the Father; still, we need for our best good the habit and form of prayer, — the bended knee, the spoken word, the closed door.

3. Be scrupulous in your observance of what are called religious duties. Observe the Sabbath as God's day, with spiritual calm and reverence, with a gladness that is more than earthly, with worship and fresh entrance into the realities of eternity. Have for yourselves stringent rules for attending Church; guide yourselves by a law in this matter. You can make no greater mistake than to let the habit of Church-going become a matter of mere inclination, — a fitful, uncertain thing determined by weather and caprice. Let nothing but duty keep you away from Church; let duty take you there.

It is also well to guide yourselves by some such rule as this: live close to the Church;

attend its services, the weekly one for prayer and the Sunday-school; take full part in all the work of the Church,—its charitable labors and contributions, its regular work and its special undertakings. I urge this for two reasons,—it helps the Church to do its work in the community and world, and it helps you in your own inner life. The work and influence of the Church is of unspeakable value, and, I believe, is increasingly so, standing as it does for whatever is pure and high and generous and true and good. I want you young people who are coming into it, to fall in with and lay hold of this work, and make its influence yet stronger and deeper; for there is nothing that will so enlarge and strengthen and sweeten and ennoble your own life as to work in these ways.

4. Finally, let me urge you to live near to God in Christ. This is beyond everything else, beyond external duty, or any coming and going, any doing or not doing. Live a spiritual life,—you know little as yet what these words mean, but you will come to know them.

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Strive to know God, to feel Him ; endure as seeing Him ; aspire to Him ; do not rest nor be content except as you have a sense of God. If you sin, return to Him with repentance. If you become engrossed in this world's work or pleasure, recall yourself to the thought of God. Pray to Him, commune with Him, love Him, serve Him. You came from Him, you will go to Him ; live mindful of your source and destiny. This, surely, is wisdom.

And then, make it an abiding purpose to come into oneness with Christ ; this is to be the glad struggle of your whole life. Take Him for your guide ; do as He says ; live with Him ; die to sin with Him ; obey with Him ; go up to God with Him ; get into oneness with Him, and so know His peace and joy. You cannot realize this to-day, nor to-morrow ; but after months and years you may realize it. You may not, to-day, feel that Christ is all, that God is the only reality ; but if you fill out the plan you here adopt, you will come at last, and perhaps soon, to know that Christ is indeed all, — all of duty and hope, — and to say of God, “ Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and

there is none upon earth that I desire besides THEE."

PRAYER.

"O Lord God of infinite mercy, who hast sent Thy Holy Son into the world to redeem us from all evil, let my faith, I beseech Thee, be the parent of a good life, a strong shield to repel the fiery darts of the devil; and grant that I may be supported by its strength in all temptations, and refreshed by its comforts in all my sorrows, till from the imperfections of this life it may arrive at the consummation of an eternal and never-ceasing love; through Jesus Christ. Amen."

HOME AND CHARACTER.

“IF a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”

“AND He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.”

“FATHERS, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

“No power is to be weakened, but only its opposite power strengthened.” — JEAN PAUL.

“COME, let us for our children live.”

FROEBEL.

XII.

HOME AND CHARACTER.

"As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."

PROVERBS xxvii. 8.



HIS comparison reminds us of Wordsworth's lines "To the Skylark," — a bird that the Duke of Argyll thinks we ought to have introduced here instead of the English sparrow: —

"Type of the wise, who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

This couplet seems to me not only the most beautiful in our language, but to be as true as it is apt and beautiful. The wise soar, but do not roam, — that is, they are definite and orderly in their lives and purposes; heaven and home are kindred points, — they fill the same place in the heart of man; the wise are true to each.

Wordsworth touches a very deep truth when he says that they are *kindred*. We use one to intensify our representation of the other. We say that a home is heavenly, but we do not say so much as when we say that heaven is a home. The home is the starting-point in our illustration; we cannot describe heaven until we know what *home* is.

We have hardly need to experience it, to know it. The instinct is so deep and assertive that we know it intuitively. It is wrought into the nature of almost every living thing. There is scarcely an animal or insect that has not its place where it returns at night or for rest. Certain birds and animals migrate, and some are so gregarious that they must constantly move in search of food; but the vast majority have a lair, or nest, or covert, to which they come back for safety and sleep, and to meet their young or their mates. This great dominating instinct must yield a vast happiness. Abroad, there is fear and danger; but at home, only repose, and the brooding of young, and consciousness of safety. It is probably true that by far the greater part of the happiness of

the animal creation is found in their homes. We thus see what a powerful instinct underlies this fact, or relation, that we call *home*.

See, also, how the imagination has dealt with it. Whenever we would picture the highest felicity, either earthly or heavenly, we call it a *home*. Heaven is nothing else; when named as an "eternal home," every heart responds, and at its fullest. The home involves incomparably the strongest and most lasting elements of our nature. It lies alongside of, or rather is the environment and atmosphere of, our physical instincts, our human love, our moral character, our religion; all have their field and their ground of existence in the home. Any conscious weakening of its sense marks a step in degradation. Its obliteration, if it ever occurs, indicates an utter collapse and extinction of character. Any drifting away from it in fact or feeling is significant of danger. Its indestructibility as an instinct — and it seems to be indestructible — is the main ground of hope yielded by nature. There is a story told of an old Norse viking, who, when a boy, had tended his father's goats upon the hills of

Norway. He became strong, sailed the seas, and robbed, and got great wealth, and finally built a palace on the Bosphorus, amidst flowers and soft scenes, where he lived till old age came on, when all about him faded out of sight and recollection, and the only sound he could hear was the kids bleating for him on the rocky hill-sides of Norway. It is related of the great President Nott, who died nearly a century old, that he sank into a literal second childhood, and was hushed to sleep by the same cradle-hymn his mother sang to him when an infant, and that visions of his early home and of his mother, who died when he was fifteen, floated constantly before him, and that he commended his soul for the last time to his Creator in the child's prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep." Life circles round to the beginning. When the merchant has made a fortune and would rest, he goes back to his early home, buys the ancestral acres, listens to the brook that sang to him when a boy and to the patter of rain upon the self-same roof, talks of early days, of old companions, of parents whose love and toil he now fully measures, and plans to

mingle his dust with theirs. I am not sure what this revival of early memories signifies. The physiologists would say it shows merely that the earliest impressions are deepest — made when the mind is most plastic — and therefore last longest. But I do not think a physical explanation is the reason of a moral process or fact. The question remains, Why are we made in such a way that the earliest impressions are deepest and come out at the close of life, so that it is not uncommon for an old man to go out of existence full of the thoughts and feelings that played within him when a child, and with no other memories? It seems to indicate a dominance of the earliest impressions and principles, and that when life begins again in other worlds, it is under the lead of these first influences, — that thus life forever keeps the keynote first struck. If so, it is but adding the emphasis of eternity to that of time, as to the importance of early impressions. They dominate a man through life; perhaps they govern him through eternity. If they rise into the consciousness after years of subsidence, why should they not live on, surviving because they are the strongest?

And so, to-day, I bring before you the familiar but never outworn theme of home influence. I begin with this proposition, — assuming its truth, — that *the home commonly determines the character of the children*. Blood, unaccountable eccentricity, and external temptation modify this influence, so that sometimes characters issue from homes at variance with its spirit, alien to it in temper and trait; but for the most part children wear and continue to carry the impress of the home. If you will watch and examine any young person carefully and thoroughly, you will find not only clear traces of lineage, but also of the spirit of the household. It is hard to decide which is strongest. “Blood tells;” but it hardly tells more than does the moral atmosphere of the home. Of course, blood and spirit usually agree, and make a common impression. If household influence is feeble, lineage makes its full natural impression; if it is strong, it is more apparent than that of lineage, and outmasters it; otherwise humanity could make no gain.

But we cannot go back of ancestral influences. If “the tiger lives on” in us, if we

have inherited cruel or deceitful or weak qualities, we cannot help it, though we can bruise the heads of such serpents. Humanity has a progress upward; it grows continually finer, — less of animal and more of man. Each generation may pass on its life to the next, finer-grained, more spiritual and harmonious, than it received it. We have all of us seen a hard parentage coming under refined and Christian influences, and rearing a family gentle and fine. Nature is kindly to such a process, working with the eternal plan that evolves good out of ill, and leads on creation from the lower to the higher. Lineage we cannot alter; and so our main field of effort is the home as it already exists. How shall we order it so that it shall be best for those who are in it?

1. We should remember that the family is not only a divinely constituted institution, but should be also humanly constituted; that is, it should be organized with distinct rules for a clear purpose, and imbued so far as may be with a well-defined spirit.

The home is often left to shape itself; it has

no law, no purpose, no spirit, but such as the hour dictates. The home comes about; it happens; it is not built and framed and made an orderly thing, having an order because it exists for an end. The most imperative thing a family has to do is to organize itself into a home. If a set of men were thrown together for the first time upon an island, or in some remote ungoverned region, the first thing they would do would be to organize themselves under laws. They would hardly sleep before they would determine what they might and might not do, and what penalty would follow disobedience. A family requires organization quite as much, and for the same reason, namely, because it is a society existing for the common good. It must have its methods of securing this common good of all its members, and these methods are the *laws* of the household. They need not be made prominent, for in divine things laws are inwrought and hidden; but they must exist. You can no more have a true family without them than you can have a body without a skeleton. The bony framework does not show in a fair, well-nourished body; but it is

under it, and makes it. The lives of children should be regulated by these requirements, and any infraction of them should be regarded seriously. There ought to be no peace nor rest in the household so long as a child is habitually disobedient. The first, last, and uppermost purpose of the family should be to see that its laws are obeyed by its members. There is no diviner thing in the universe than obedience, for that is righteousness.

Herbert Spencer says that "the most important attribute of man as a moral being is the faculty of self-control." It may not be quite correct to call that an attribute which is an achievement; but what he means is true, for self-control is the main factor of character. "Not to be impulsive, not to be spurred hither and thither by each desire that in turn comes uppermost, but to be self-restrained, self-balanced, governed by the joint decision of the feelings in council assembled, before whom every action shall have been debated and calmly determined," — to bring a child to this is almost the largest function of the family, and it can be gained nowhere else. But the family itself

must, of course, be organized on this principle, and work on this method.

2. Make such rules as are right in themselves and best for the children. When I speak of *rules*, I do not mean that a code of regulations is to be kept before the household, and daily life turned into a drill; — that should grow out of something very different; still there must be a wholesome consciousness of the laws.

Some of the college presidents tell me that discipline is an easier thing in their colleges than it used to be, — the sense of honor, duty, and respect in the students, being higher, secures a truer collegiate life; but they have, nevertheless, a set of sound rules that are not only ready for use, but create an unfelt yet not unrealized atmosphere of authority.

Two principles should enter into household laws; they should be right in themselves, and they should be such as are best for the child. There are certain self-evident laws of the home: children must obey; they must respect; they must fall into the current of the house-life

and thus secure its unity. We wonder at the strictness and severity of the Jewish code in this matter, — children who struck parents were to be put to death. The fearfulness of the penalty expressed the greatness of the offence. It sprang from no semi-barbarous superstition, nor was it a mere relic of the patriarchal system that combined the household and the civil government, but grew out of the profounder truth that the family stands for the divine order, — the father being as God to his household, and any resistance to him like a blow aimed at God himself. And this conception, though not this excessive rule, is in force still. Until the child can take in the great thought of God as a reigning father and mankind a family, the human parents and family fill their place. The life and discipline of the family is preparatory to, and of the same nature with, that of the world. Man is never outside of the family; when he outgrows one, he steps into another, and one paves the way to the other. Obedience to the laws of home is only a step that precedes obedience to the nation and to God. If parents do not teach and enforce one, the

other will never follow. If your children do not obey your wise laws, if they do not respect your just wishes, if they do not trust your judgment and love, they will do none of these things to society and to God. You let your child disobey you, you suffer it to settle down into a steady disregard of your wishes; but you are doing more,—you are passing it on to God, a disobedient and unmindful creature; you are establishing it in the moral condition it will probably retain forever. You and I, who have reached adult years, understand very well that it is our chief business *to obey the laws*, civil, social, and moral. It is the great lesson of life,—to bring the lawlessness of the individual will under the wise regulations of human society. Household obedience is not only a preparation for this, but an essential condition of it. If a child is not taught to obey, it is forever after bruising itself against the barriers of society, or throwing itself over them into perdition. Jean Paul profoundly says that “it is in childhood that the divine is born of the human.”

Parents should also make such special rules

for children as are best for them ; that is, make the child's *good* the standard of requirement. If you do not wholly approve what the child desires, it should not be allowed. It is a wretched state of things when two wills, two opinions, two sets of feelings, prevail in a household. It is hardly less wretched when, for the sake of peace, parental wills and wishes are weakly yielded, and the child takes up the reins of government. There is but one question to be considered, and that should never be thrust aside, — *What is for the child's good?* If it is well for children to read only light fiction ; if it is for their good to dance half the night ; if it is well for them to spend their evenings outside of the home, in saloons, at young clubs, in surrounding country hotels, and in the chance company they encounter there, — give these things your sanction, but do not weakly evade the difficult question on the score that young people must have a good time, that they must do what their set does, that they must run some risks, that they must learn to take care of themselves, that they will outgrow their follies. Let it be one

thing or the other,—full indorsement or full prohibition. For the worst element of household life is a double standard of conduct; it is moral chaos, it is parental abdication, it is the reversal of the relation between parent and child.

A strong, wise will is the foundation of a good home. It should be clothed with infinite tenderness and cheer, it need not be intrusive, it seldom need come to the surface, it need not use words of threat or command, it will seldom if ever use the rod, it may allow a large and generous liberty; but it must exist. It is a common testimony that there is more respect and affection in children for stern, wise parents than for weak and indulgent ones. There is a world of wisdom in the remark of a wilful but generous child to her strong and wise mother: "Mamma, if you were not an angel, I believe I should be terribly enraged; but now I must love you, and I am almost content."

John Foster said: "It is a wretched plan that does not maintain authority as a necessary and habitual thing, in so uniform a manner

that a child scarcely ever thinks of resistance any more than of thrusting its hand into the fire." And he adds that "acts of authority and correction should be done without bustle, in a short, calm, decisive manner."

But while authority is the foundation of the home, as of the State, it is not the whole of it, and alone can do little.

3. We should give time to our homes. It is one of the evil features of our American life that business is so ordered that little time is left for the household and for the church. The merchant, except in the large towns, keeps his store open from seven till nine o'clock ; the lawyer must always be in his office ; the physician is subject to calls at all times ; our mill-people work ten hours ; our school-teachers are busy all day, and spend long evenings over endless examination papers and compositions,—the most wearying drudgery for eyes and brain imaginable ; and there is scarcely any other labor that does not require time beyond its regular hours. What time have we left for our homes and families ? Almost none ; and

yet a true home is impossible without it. All I can say is, compass it if possible. When Dr. Guthrie, the great Scotch preacher, was called to Edinburgh, he resolved to spend his evenings with his family, and not in his study, as was customary with the other pastors of the city, — a bit of common-sense for which he is more to be respected than for his superb eloquence. Sir Thomas More, the great statesman, said that it was hard work, with his public duties, to find time for private study, because “I must talk with my wife, and chat with my children, and have somewhat to say to my servants; for all these things I reckon as a part of my business, except a man will resolve to be a stranger at home.”

If the truth were known, it would be found that the homes from which float out these social wrecks all about us are mere eating and sleeping places. No time is devoted to the nurture of family life. The father and mother do not sit down with the children for a social chat and a hearty laugh, or perchance a romp. Children do not go to ruin from homes where these things are habitual; it is such things that

keep them from the associations that lead to ruin.

4. Give your children an abundance of amusement, but, as far as possible, share it with them. They can hardly have too much if it is of the right sort, or too little if it is not. When it treads the borders of vice; when it consists of mere excitement; when it trenches upon hours due to sleep; when it is a draught upon the nervous system,—better hard, unbroken toil, or sullen idleness, than such pleasure. But of fun, jollity, sport, there can hardly be too much. Alas, that any of us outgrow it! And the worst of it is that we withhold it from our children in those ways and in that place where they should have the most of it, and drive them into the streets for it. I wish it were possible to get this matter fixed in the minds of parents upon rational principles. The happy life is one that begins in the atmosphere of constant, not occasional, enjoyment. The morning brings joy; the evening distils peace; every moment sends up the exhalation of joy. In a true, well-ordered home there is a con-

stant pleasure. The simple exercise of the affections, — the loving and the being loved, — the mutual service and sympathy, bring to us about as much joy as we are capable of receiving. It may be intensified by actual sports, by holidays, by occasional crowning experiences, like a journey, or some rare gift, or the tender gratification of some cherished scheme or desire of the child. Whatever is pure, whatever leaves no stain, whatever is natural and healthful, give in the fullest measure; the divine bounty, that “giveth liberally and upbraideth not,” is our pattern here. But it is a matter to be considered, — secured if it is lacking, and regulated if it is not wise, as food and dress are regulated.

We do not often enough think of the far-reaching effect of a happy childhood. Scarcely any influence follows us up into maturity that is so strong and moulding as the recollection of such a childhood. It is not merely a delight that the memory fondly broods over, but it is the chain — light as gossamer, but strong as adamant — that binds us to the virtue and innocence of those early days. There is no

other stream that will bear on into manhood and womanhood the teachings of childhood and all the sacred powers of the home, but one that flows out of household happiness. I verily think it is the key of destiny. Make a child wisely, deeply, and continuously happy, and you have done the best thing for it possible. Trained and educated it needs to be; but the memory of its early happiness will bind it to whatever of virtue and goodness and wisdom are in you and your teachings. But no teaching, no example, will preserve its power unless united to happy memories. Gloom and unhappiness nullify and pervert all good influences with which they come in contact. Alas for the children that have no such memories, who hear but scolding and reproof and quarrelling; whose caresses are blows, and whose lullabies are mingled with curses! What wonder that a soft place cannot be found in their hearts for any seed of good, and that they grow up criminals and profligates?

5. Have as good a home externally as you can provide. This is not saying, have a *costly*

home. The least necessary element in comfort and cheer is money. Something of this is needed; but cleanliness, taste, observation, and a cheery spirit will do more. Costly furniture, soft carpets, broad mirrors, and light-hiding draperies have little to do with making a home attractive, and even with making it comfortable. There is nothing that furnishes so beautifully and wisely as books and pictures; no light is so sweet as that reflected from flowers; no carpet is so beautiful as a cleanly floor; no chairs are so adorning as those that are simply comfortable. Parents often say, "If I were in better circumstances I would have a more attractive home for my friends;" but it were better to dismiss the thought of friends, and think of making home so pleasant and cheery, so well furnished with books, so adorned with pictures, so sweetly *home-like*, in short, that it would seem to children the best place on earth. I once stood in the room at Marshfield used by the young children of Daniel Webster; its walls were literally covered with pictures, — not costly, but pleasing and instructive. The great man well knew what he was doing in thus

adorning the walls of his children's room. He himself drew the sweetest pleasures of his life from the memories of his early days; they add an indescribable grace and pathos to the later years of his life, and he strove to pass on the heritage.

6. Cultivate an intense oneness and intimacy in the family. There is some fearfully wrong influence at work in a household where there is distance and shyness between children and parents. It is a sad thing when a daughter has any confidant more trusted than her mother or — according to Mr. Ruskin — father, or a son than one or both of his parents. Yet it is a condition very apt to come about unless a habit of intimacy be cultivated. From the first, share in their thoughts and feelings, and in any sorrow or anxiety have the readiest sympathy. Children have their griefs; young persons their disappointments, their moods of unaccountable gloom; they suffer far more than we who have learned to endure, and have attained to faith and “the philosophic calm,” or perhaps have been dulled by years. The occasion of grief

is no measure of its greatness or reality. The child who comes to you in tears over a broken toy or a disappointed holiday is suffering more than your neighbor who has lost half his fortune, and is in more need of comfort and sympathy. Know what your boy is thinking about, what he talks of with his companions, what are his tastes and aversions, what books he reads, where he spends his time, what is the character of his associates. Unless you know these things, he will drift away, and come under stronger influences than yours. There is nothing so much to be dreaded in a child as a premature individualism. It is God's plan that we should go through the world as families, — a phalanx of love firmly linked together, staying each other when we falter, and together breasting the storms of life. The dangerous period is that transitional one when we are "rounding into self," — the period between the family into which we were born to that formed by marriage. It is the stage of external individuality, and hence of moral weakness. To render it safe, it should be bridged by the influence of the first — sweet and intimate and tender — reach-

ing over to the second, in which responsibility and new affections confirm all that has gone before.

7. But, in order that family influence may be strongest, it must be deeply and directly Christian. All that I have urged is indeed Christian, but no aggregate of good qualities fills out that word, — it implies also a specific thing. I have no faith in, nor hope of, any training that is not Christian. You have no holding ground till your anchor is dropped in the cleft of that rock. There is no seed that is surely vital but that of Christian truth. There is no soil pledged to yield a harvest but the conscience, sown with this seed, watered by prayer and by all that prayer means, and refreshed by heavenly dews. There is no remembrance that so stays and grows as that of the teachings of Christian morality in the household; it literally *grows*. Other influences weaken; but this takes on more meaning, and becomes more and more rational and practical under the experience of life, because it was shaped and directed under the teaching of love, and love

seldom mistakes. Its tenderness takes on an unspeakable, ever-growing pathos. It melts and subdues, and how often, at last, does it conquer and win!

Jean Paul, who has penetrated more deeply into the child nature than any other save Him who made it the type of His heavenly kingdom, says in his "Levana:" "The fruits of right [moral] training cannot be at once harvested, and you will often wonder that after doing so much, so much yet remains to be done; but in after years the results of your labors will richly appear, for that which is planted must first germinate and break through its rude coverings before it can rise to rejoice in the sunlight and, in turn, bear fruit." The sudden and absolute conversion of great sinners, which is often called a miracle of grace, has usually been preceded by a piously taught childhood, — a mother's love, mixed with divine love, brooded over the young heart, sang to it in sacred measures, taught it some words of simple prayer, held it to her own heart while it beat with yearning devotion, breathed into it a spirit of truth and reverence, and so sent it out into

the stormy, overmastering world of temptation. Such seed never perishes, for it is eternal in its quality. When it comes to fruit, we call it a miracle of grace, and so it is ; but it is the gracious miracle of seed long buried, and bursting into growth when some convulsion has thrown it to the surface, where it feels the divine light and warmth.

And not only is the religious feature of the home the most powerful and lasting, but it is the sweetest to remember. Talk with the New-England-born man in New York or Chicago of his boyhood, — he may be far enough from any religious feeling himself, but he will tell you in some confidential moment, with a pleased, half-reverent voice, that he was brought up to go to church, that his mother prayed by his bedside, that he recollects his father's prayers more distinctly than anything else, — even to the very words and tones, how carefully he was required to observe the Sabbath, and how strictly taught in all matters of religion, and how it seemed to be the main thing with the household. A little hard and over strict it may have

been ; but he will tell you that it was all wise and wholesome, and that whatever of good there is in him is due to such a training.

There is no obligation due to posterity so imperative as that of giving it a Christian training, and there is no debt of gratitude so deeply felt — felt with tears and with ever-growing intensity — as that which follows such training. For all else passes away with the passing world, all else the moth and rust of time doth corrupt ; but this abides, — treasure laid up in the heaven of the spirit and in the heaven to which it conducts. When Luther's babe was brought to him by its nurse, his blessing was : "Go thy way and be good. Money I shall not bequeath thee ; but I shall leave thee a rich God, who will not forsake thee."

8. I say, in conclusion : Cherish the home with an infinite tenderness. You cannot love it too much, nor give it too much time and thought. Remember that life has nothing better to offer you ; it is the climax and crown of God's gifts. Make every day of life in it rich and sweet. It will not last long. See to it

that you plant no seeds of bitter memory, that there be no neglect, no harshness, to haunt you in after years. Your little ones will die, and go hence with only your words and spirit planted in their eternal nature. Sons and daughters will go from you into the great world to live as you have taught them, — strong or weak according to the spirit you have engrafted upon them. How will you yearn for them, living or dead! How sweet or how bitter will be the memory of the days when they prattled about you!

THE END.

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